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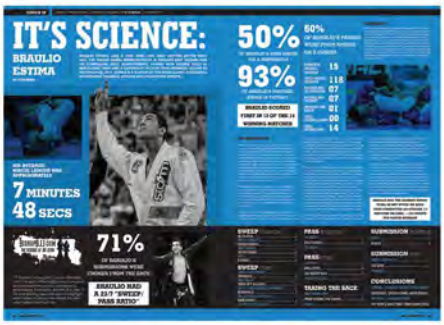

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GRAPPLER FIGHTER TEACHER
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JIU JITSU STYLE

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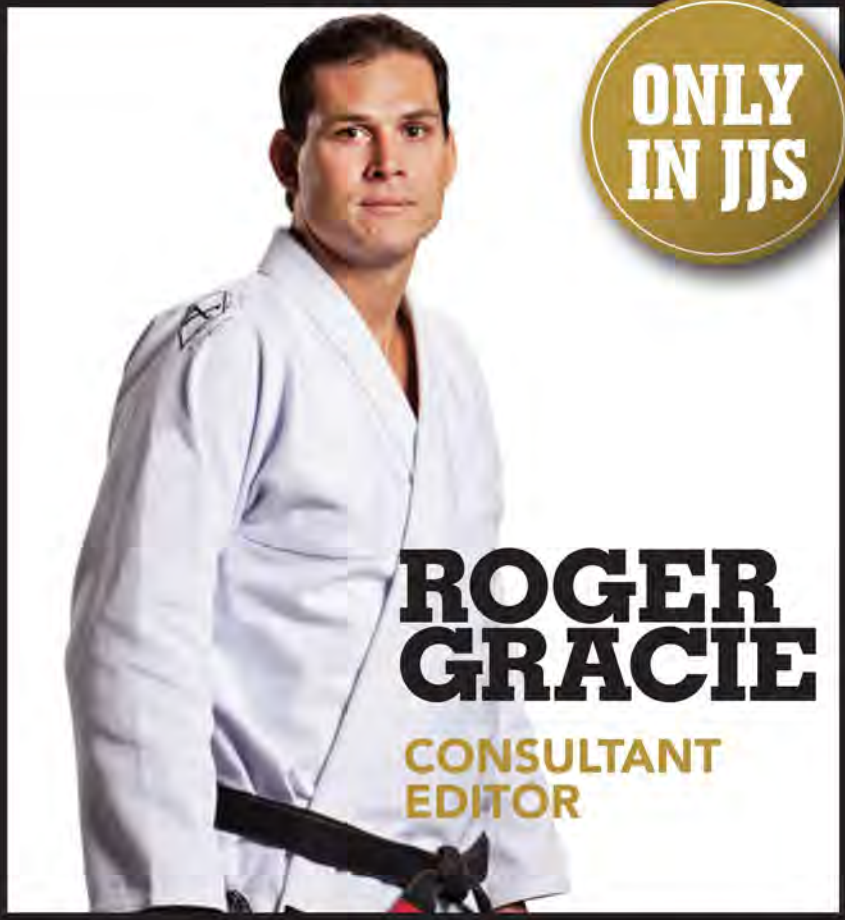

As always, it's been a very busy period for me since writing my last column. The end of 2014 was a very successful one, and I am delighted to have picked up a victory on my ONE FC debut in early December.

I had been looking forward to getting back to competitive action for quite some time, so as soon as I was offered the fight I was keen to start my training. I was also very excited to be fighting in Manila, a city with plenty of heritage for hosting big prize fights over the years.

> **"THOUGH I'VE BECOME MORE CONFIDENT IN MY STRIKING I WASN'T EXPECTING TO PICK UP MY FIRST KO WIN OVER A SEASONED THAI BOXER LIKE JAMES MCSWEENEY"**

Having made my MMA debut in 2006, I now feel like I'm starting to find some rhythm in the sport. Obviously my real strength is jiu jitsu, and I will always represent jiu jitsu, but it's been an interesting learning process developing my striking and also my wrestling.

Though I've become more confident in my striking I wasn't expecting to pick up my first KO win over a seasoned Thai boxer like James McSweeney. It wasn't my game plan to look for a KO (as I'm sure you'd all have guessed) but I'm just happy to have got the job done. Now I'm starting to tighten up my strikes I feel I can give people problems standing up, as well as on the ground, which is real progress. I'd like to thank everyone for all the messages and kind words I received after the fight – it really means a lot.

We have kick-started 2015 with Ryan Hall as our first cover star of the New Year. Ryan is extremely well regarded as a teacher, as well as one of the early developers of the 50/50 position. It is always interesting to see people developing new positions and trying to implement fresh ideas, and Ryan goes into great detail in his interview. Make sure you check it out.

We also have an awesome feature interview with Felipe Pena, a young guy who has burst onto the black belt scene over the last 18 months. Having picked up his first world title in 2014 – with victory over Andre Galvao in the final – I'm sure this kid has a very bright future ahead of him.

As always, we have plenty of great technique for you to try out at the academy, including sequences with Michelle Nicolini, Clark Gracie, the 10th Planet FREAKS and our resident, Nick Brooks. Get studying!

I hope you like the latest issue of the magazine and – until next time – keep training and enjoying jiu jitsu.

ROGER GRACIE

manto

×

KRAZY DEE

fall/winter '14

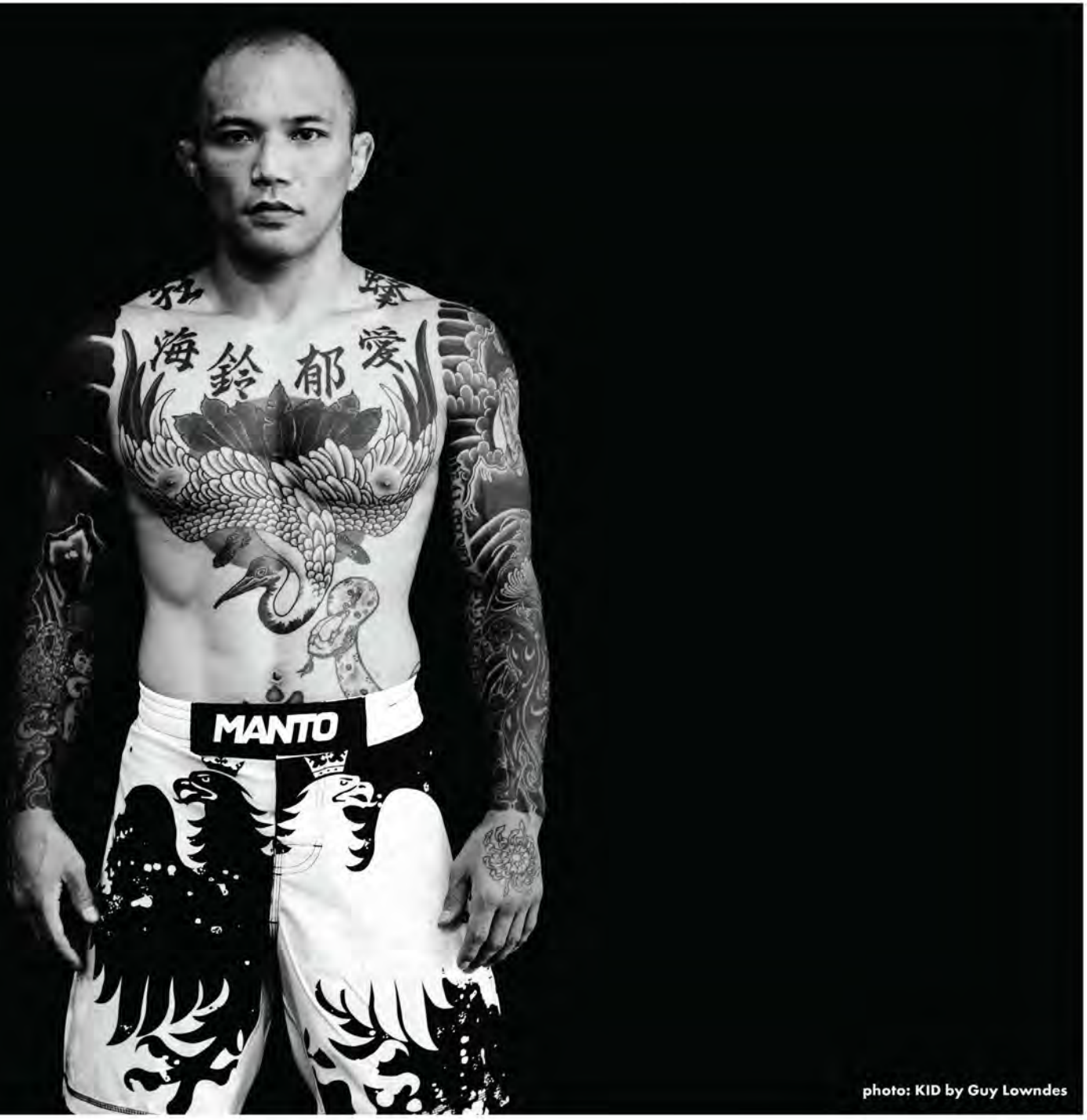

photo: KID by Guy Lowndes

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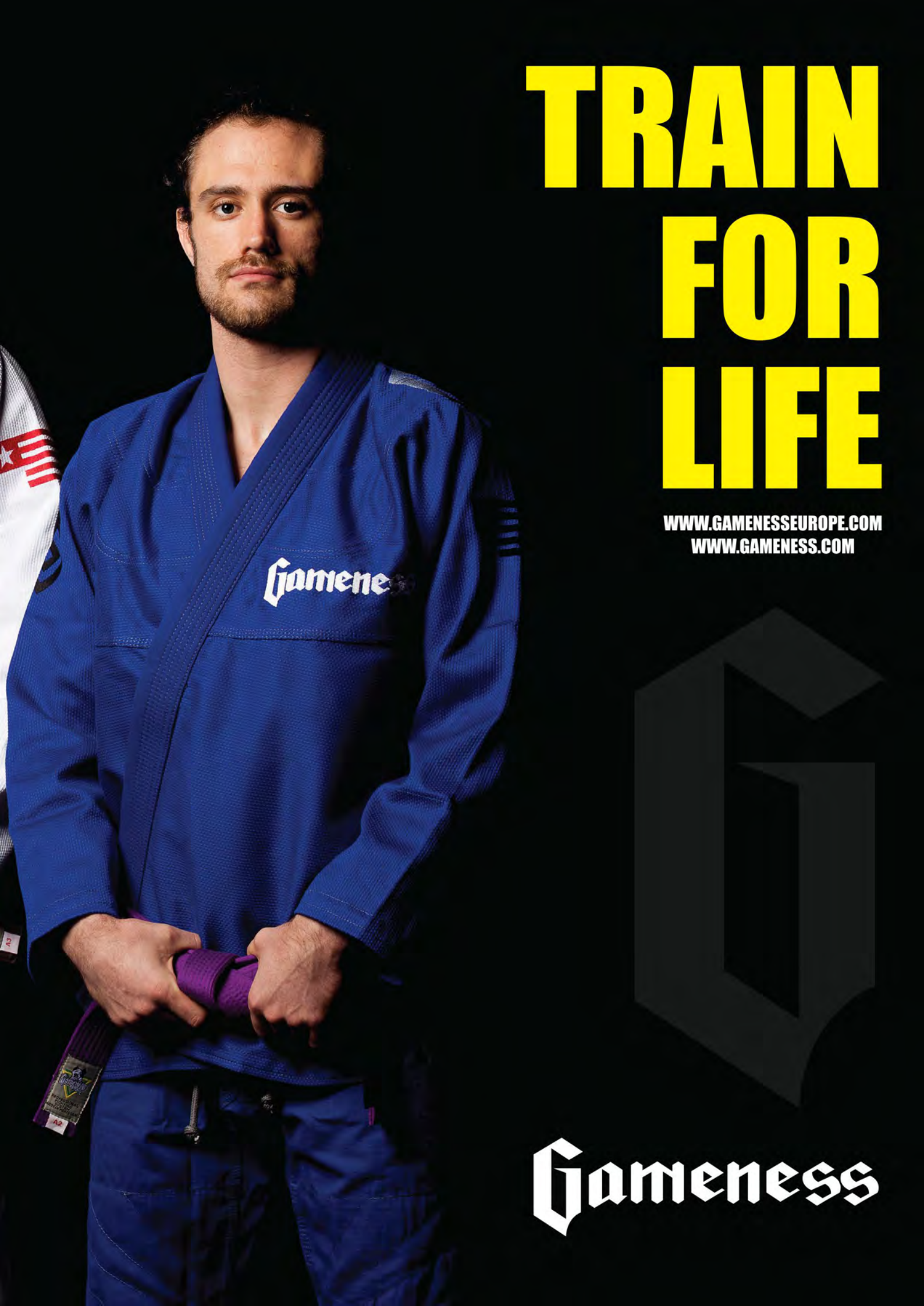
LAUNCHING JANUARY 2015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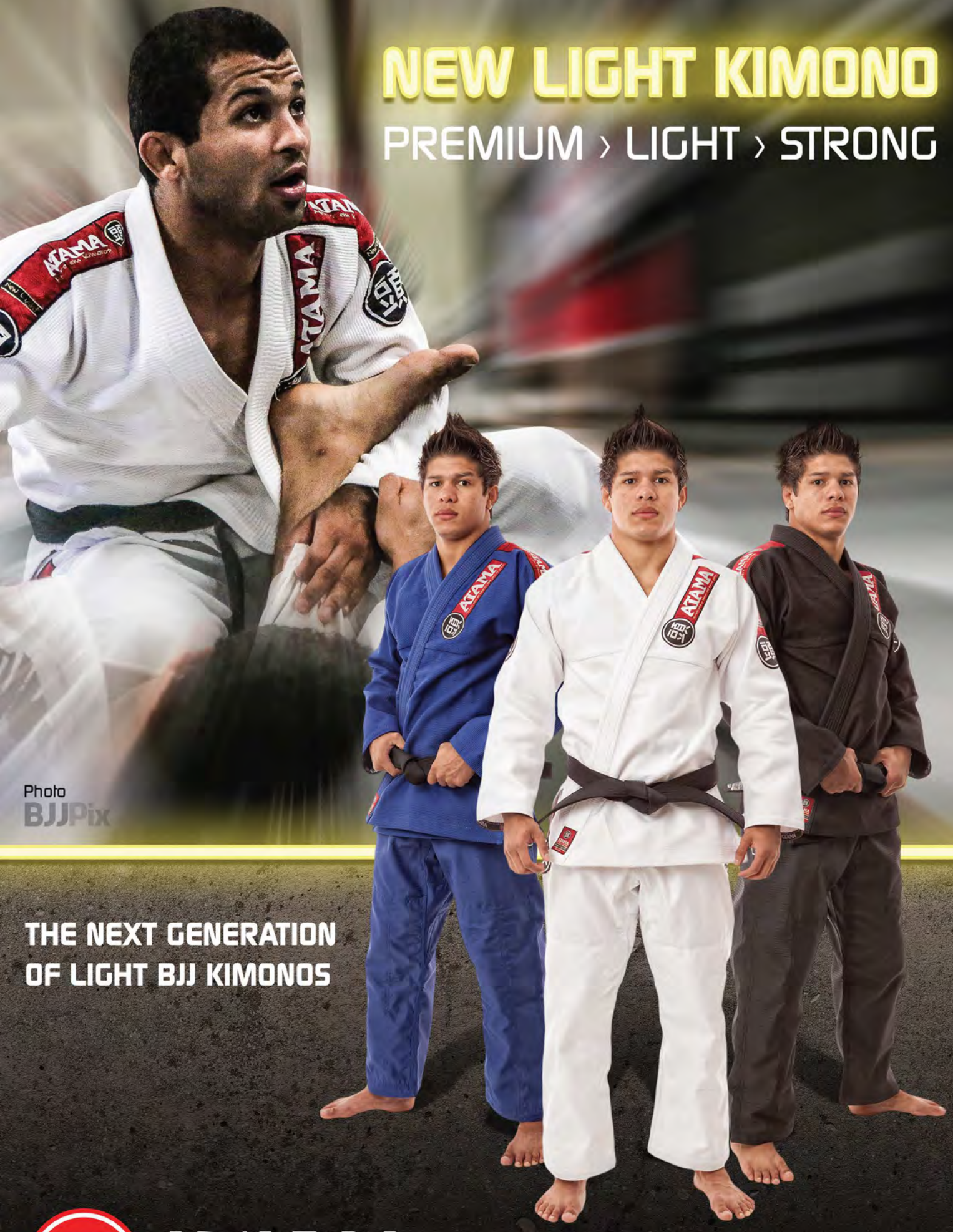

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THE BIG PICTURE

Renzo Gracie and Kazushi Sakuraba face-off during their headline match at Metamoris V.

PICTURE: SCOTT HIRANO FOR METAMORIS PRO

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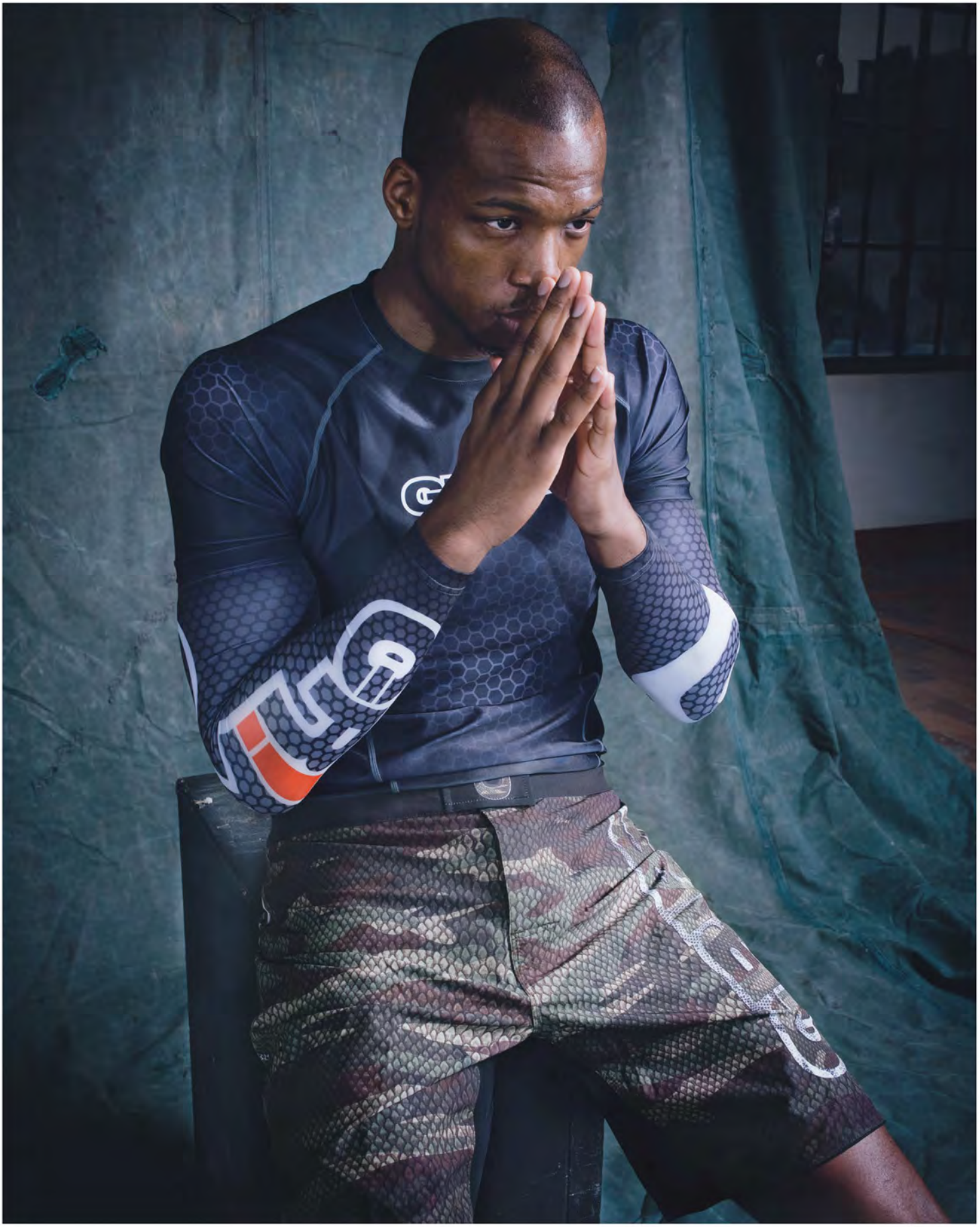

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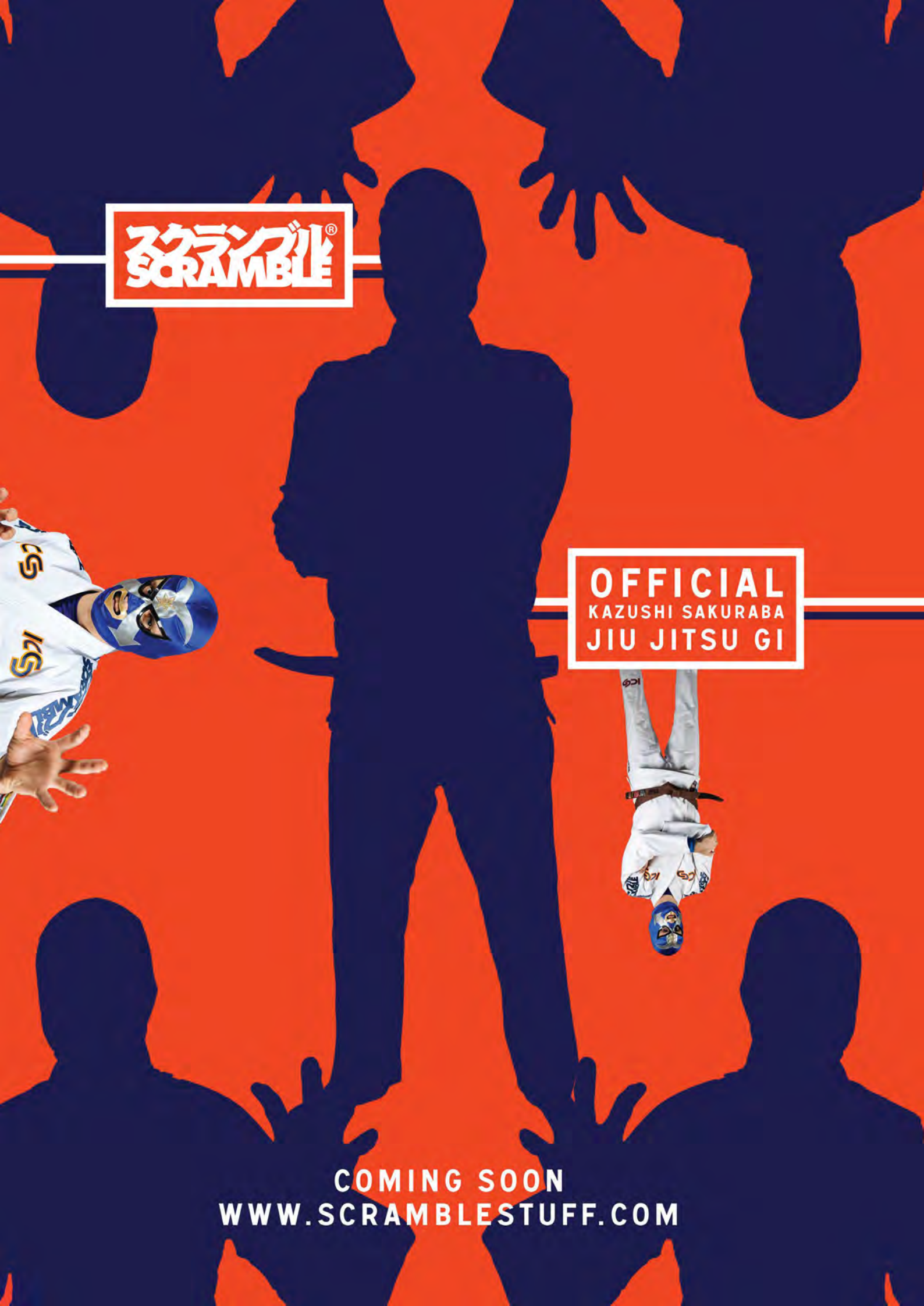
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NEWSROOM

#WWE #CMPUNK #UFC #GRACIEACADEMY #BJJINMMA

GRACIE ACADEMY STUDENT CM PUNK SIGNS TO UFC

Pro-wrestler Phil 'CM Punk' Brooks has been signed to the Ultimate Fighting Championship, a controversial move likely to upset purists, but sure to make the marketing department happy. From a BJJ perspective, the main interest is that CM Punk has spent time (albeit intermittently) at the Gracie Academy.

Much like the UFC, Rener Gracie knows the value of exposure to a new audience. For years now, he has made sure to seize upon opportunities to attach the Gracie Academy to UFC fighters. Ronda Rousey, Lyoto Machida and Mark Muñoz have all been to Torrance and duly featured in Renergised video content.

CM Punk is the latest opportunity for Rener to use the UFC as a platform to advertise the Gracie Academy brand, which in turn helps to continue the long-standing relationship between BJJ and MMA. After all, the UFC started life as a vehicle for Rener's father to promote Gracie Jiu Jitsu: more than two decades later, the Gracie Academy and the UFC can still help each other.

#JJGF #RICKSONBYARMBAR #THEMOVEMENT

JJGF ANNOUNCES BELT STANDARDS AND NEW RICKSON VIDEOS

The first test of the much touted JJGF rules is approaching, at the Circle of Iron in Nebraska on the 31st January 2015. Having previously followed IBJJF guidelines there is a prominent announcement on the website announcing that: "All Circle of Iron BJJ tournaments will now follow the JJGF rule book." It will be interesting to see if other established competitions also decide to make that switch; a number of organisers will no doubt be watching Nebraska closely in January.

Rickson's JJGF has also published its criteria for ranking up until brown belt, which unlike most schools are specific. Whether or not such rigidity is a good thing is up for debate, but you can now download the 'JJGF Collateral Adult Standards' from the website. Along with the technical requirements you might anticipate, there are also sections for 'group dynamics', 'social interaction' and 'self-responsibility'. To give an example, point 4.2 under brown belt self-responsibility is "Collect data and record progress toward attainment of a personal jiu-jitsu goal."

Most exciting of all, the December newsletter announced that there will be new video content from Rickson Gracie himself, having filmed techniques with small groups of students from a variety of academies. JJGF.com announced that: "Tonight kicked-off the production with 3 hours of Jiu Jitsu lessons with 7 different mini lessons for both stand-up self-defense and the ground positions of the art."

#IJF #JUDORULES #GRAPPLING4ALL

IJF ADOPTS ISOLATIONIST ATTITUDE TO OTHER COMBAT SPORTS

The International Judo Federation has been criticised before for what appears to be an increasingly insular and close-minded approach to competition, in the interests of promoting 'true judo'. Recently it has started to try and isolate judo even further, attempting to cut off the influence of related sports like mixed martial arts and BJJ. The IJF sent out an email on the 17th November that made their perspective clear. Reproduced on adcombat.com, this email proclaimed that: "Any judoka classified in the IJF ranking list is not authorised to take part in an international competition of any combat sport, other than judo, unless they have "specific authorization by the IJF."

In a comparable development, the Fédération Française de Judo have bizarrely proposed 'Mixed Jujitsu Arts' as a counter to MMA, of which the FFJDA would be in charge. As reported in *Le Monde* and *L'Express*, this was put to Judo Club Thouarsais in a letter (reprinted on lexpress.fr), stating that: "A committee within the FFJDA will in the short term be entrusted with the development of MJA pedagogy and teacher training." Unsurprisingly, club head Yann Leroux was not impressed; he plans instead to continue his successful MMA program.

#JIUJITSUWORLDLEAGUE #PROBJJ #PROGRESS #GOPRO

JIU JITSU WORLD LEAGUE

Like Rickson and his JJGF, Rigan Machado has also been involved in efforts to create change in jiu jitsu, which he believes will be very much for the better. In Rigan's case, that change focuses on the current amateur status of most competitors, even at the elite level. There remain few opportunities to earn a living as a jiu jitsu athlete; teaching classes and seminars is still the most common route.

Rigan hopes that his new Jiu Jitsu World League could help provide an alternative. Their first event will be on the 15th January in Irvine, CA, offering $5,000 each to the winners of two 'open' divisions. Some big names are already signed up to JJWL. That includes arguably the biggest in the sport today, Marcus 'Buchecha' Almeida, who has won both his weight division and the absolute at the Mundials three years in a row.

The League promises that their 'aggressive' rule set will result in more action, with overtimes replacing advantages, harsher stalling penalties and sudden death all part of the game. Unusually for jiu jitsu, there is also a distinction between low and high amplitude throws, with the former earning you 2 points while the latter nets 4. You can find out more at jjworldleague.com.

#GIDRIVE #CHARITY #KIDSWORLDWIDE

GI PROJECT HELPS KIDS WORLDWIDE

At only eight years old (three of which have been spent in jiu jitsu), Valencia Bidwell is trying to make a difference for other less fortunate children. Her charity project aims to send gis to kids who can't afford them. As she put it to NewsChannel 9, "I want to help kids around the world experience the joys of Brazilian jiu jitsu like I have." She has already passed her original goal of collecting 100 gis, but she isn't stopping there.

Both of Valencia's parents also train. Mike and Sheena attend Tai Kai Martial Arts with their daughter. War veteran Mike has had an interesting journey through martial arts himself, having reached a high level in several other styles before finding BJJ. He went on to spend thirteen years at brown belt before finally earning the black this year.

Submission Fight Company have made a positive contribution to the BJJ community as they have donated 100 gis to Bidwell's project. In regards to her new goal, Valencia's answer is simple: "I don't have a limit." To support the Bidwells, head over to thegiproject.wordpress.com.

Nick Brooks (Black Elite)
IBJJF European Champion 2013
NAGA European Champion 2012
Dickie Martin (Black Leve)
Masters World Champion 2014
Heavyweight and Openweight
Sam Gibson (Blue Leve)
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#TOUKONCHALLENGE #SUBONLY #BJJEVENT #BJJINEUROPE

THE DEBUT TOUKON CHALLENGE IN LONDON

In late November, London played host to the very first Toukon Challenge, with plenty of purple, brown and black belt talent on display. The competition mat, encircled by the historical balconies and stalls of the Clapham Grand Theatre, attracted some of the best fighters Europe has to offer.

The card included a variety of matches, including submission only, country vs country, IBJJF rules and team challenge bouts. World champion, Luke Costello, headlined the event in a clash with Felipe Mota, which was fought to a draw.

FULL RESULTS

PRELIMS

Igor Terreco vs Samuel Khan (Purple Belt)
Result: Igor Terreco

Lloyd Cooper vs
Omid Alimohammadi (Purple Belt)
Result: Lloyd Cooper

Leo Quieros vs Christian Rodrigues (Black Belt)
Result: Leo Quieros

Henrique Juniao vs Raimo Posti (Black Belt)
Result: Henrique Juniao

BROWN BELT GRAND PRIX

Ross Nicholls vs Jimmy Svensson
Result: Jimmy Svensson

James Nardone vs Daan Westra
Result: Daan Westra

Viking Wong vs Nelson Teixeira
Result: Viking Wong

SEMI FINAL

Roger Dardis vs Sebastian Brosche
Result: Sebastian Brosche

Jimmy Svennson vs Daan Westra
Result: Daan Westra

FINAL

Daan Westra vs Sebastian Brosche
Result: Sebastian Brosche

BLACK BELT TEAM CHALLENGE

Max Campos (Black Thursday) vs
Adam Adshead (Europe)
Result: Max Campos

Rodolfo Nygaard (Black Thursday) vs Pablo Medina (Europe)
Result: Rodolfo Nygaard

Luiz Felipe (Europe) vs
Eduardo Concalves (Black Thursday)
Result: Eduardo Concalves

Ralf Carneborn (Europe) vs
Marco Canha (Black Thursday)
Result: Ralf Carneborn

Luiz Tosta (Black Thursday) vs
Ralf Carneborn (Stand-In) (Europe)
Result: Luiz Tosta

COUNTRY VS COUNTRY

Kywan Gracie Behring vs Sebastian Brosche
Result: Sebastian Brosche

SUBMISSION ONLY

Thomas Oyarzun vs Chris Bowe
Result: Draw

Darragh O'Connaill vs Maciej Kozak
Result: Darragh O'Connaill

Alex Cabanas vs Luiz Felipe
Result: Alex Cabanas

MAIN CARD

Eduardo Teta Rios vs Luca Anacoreta
Result: Draw

Luke Costello vs Felipe Mota
Result: Draw

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BELT PROMOTIONS

IF YOU WERE LUCKY ENOUGH TO BE AWARDED A NEW BELT RECENTLY, THIS PAGE REPRESENTS A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO SAVOUR THE MOMENT WITH RECOGNITION IN JIU JITSU STYLE! SEND IN DETAILS OF YOUR RECENT PROMOTION, INCLUDING THE RANK YOU ACHIEVED AND YOUR INSTRUCTOR'S NAME, AND WE WILL PUBLISH AS MANY AS WE CAN IN OUR MAGAZINE.

SEND YOUR EMAILS TO U2US@BJJSTYLE.COM

Caroline Wake was promoted to blue belt by Andy Roberts under Roger Gracie.

Troy Sorensen was promoted to black belt under Mike Yackulic and Master Sylvio Behring in Edmonton, Alberta.

Omar French was promoted to black belt by Piet Wilhelm/Renato Tavares in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

From left to right: Jake Sinden promoted to purple belt, Owen Elphick, professor Tom Watson, Mark Dayrell promoted to black belt, professor Paul Bridges & Kevin Teall promoted to purple belt at Dark Star Jiu Jitsu.

Blue belt promotions at BJJ Eastbourne, from left to right: Instructor David Lee, Lewis Smith, Luke Askew, Tom Kemp, Professor Ze Marcello, Steven McCarthy, instructor Tolly Plested and John Greening.

Katrina Estacio was promoted to blue belt under Amir Yafawi, a Gracie Humaita black belt.

Michael Greenfield was promoted to purple belt by Neil Simkin under Braulio Estima.

Adam Adshead was promoted to black belt by Dirty Dozen member, Chris Haueter.

Danny Burke was promoted to blue belt under Steve Campbell of Stealth BJJ.

Eduard Sabitov was promoted to blue belt under Professor Sauer.

Jon-Moses Robinson was promoted to blue belt under Derek Stewart of 10th Planet Omaha.

Liz Baird and Charly Bebbington were promoted to blue belt by Tony Bebbington.

Stephane Hennequin, was promoted to black belt under Olivier Michaelesco, a 3rd degree. black belt.

Diff Scooby Whike was promoted to brown belt under Valmyr Neto, pictured with the head of Checkmat, Leo Vieira, and Buchecha.

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR
STYLES MAKE FIGHTS

There's no way for me to kick-start this column other than by congratulating our Consultant Editor, Roger Gracie, on his ONE FC victory at the end of 2014. Ok, so I know I'm a little biased, but I'm sure 99% of our readers would have been rooting for Gracie – the jiu jitsu representative – going into his bout with James McSweeney. And, a KO win – who'd have thought it?

Roger's inclusion on the ONE FC Manila fight card not only got my attention as a fan, but it also got me thinking. I'm by no means an MMA uber fan, but I do feel my affinity with the realm of the 4oz glove has somewhat dwindled with time. It suddenly dawned on me that Roger's fight not only represented an opportunity to cheer on my coach, but also a chance to see how the classic grappler vs. striker scenario would pan out – the very same scenario that roused my interest in Mixed Martial Arts in the first place.

MMA becomes a more complete sport every day, with fighters no longer honing their skills in one discipline before diversifying their training, instead they study all facets of combat from the word go. As a result, what we see are more rounded fighters, less 'specialists' and – sadly – fewer style clashes.

Ok, so Roger managed to beat James McSweeney by KO, which given McSweeney's Thai boxing record came as a surprise to everyone (including the big man himself). That said, I personally still find a great deal of excitement in the idea of elite level grapplers plying their trade against seasoned strikers – the classic style mismatch I came to love from early UFC and PRIDE FC events.

I'm sure MMA fans will disagree but, as a jiu jitsu nut, I just love the idea of seeing the best jiu jitsu athletes facing-off against the best strikers – styles make fights after all. I guess I should be rolling with the times and stop dwelling on the good old days, but I know I'd tune in more often if there were some clearer style clashes on the cards. And, while we're at it, hands up if you'd love to see the old PRIDE FC 10-minute first round back in play? Screw it; let's bring back open weight classes while we're at it! Anyone know Dan Severn's number…?

As it's the start of a New Year, it's time to set a few jiu jitsu goals. I'm a big believer in competition representing a great platform for development, but it's something that I have never done regularly. Now a year into my journey as a brown belt, I plan to pick up the pace in 2015. I've also vowed to continue my new routine of stretching on a daily basis. Big thanks to Sebastian Brosche for the intro into yoga!

Thanks for picking up our latest issue and keep training!

Callum

CALLUM MEDCRAFT

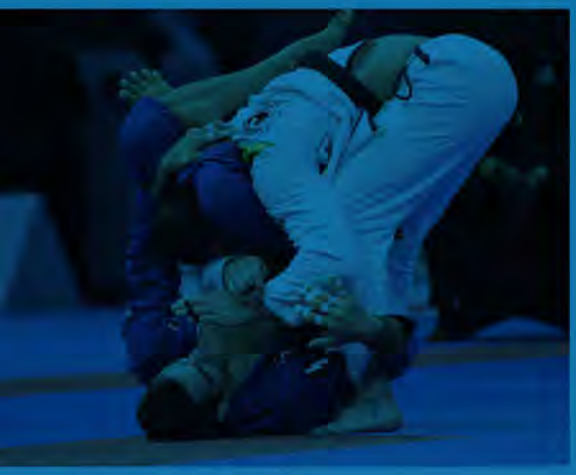
×SHOYOROLL×
BE FIRST. NO LESS

IT'S SCIENCE:

BRAULIO ESTIMA

BY TYLER BISHOP

BRAULIO ESTIMA, LIKE A FINE WINE, HAS ONLY GOT BETTER WITH AGE. THE GRACIE BARRA REPRESENTATIVE IS PERHAPS BEST KNOWN FOR HIS COMPELLING ADCC ACHIEVEMENTS, HAVING WON DOUBLE GOLD IN BARCELONA, 2009, AND A SUPERFIGHT VICTORY OVER RONALDO JACARE IN NOTTINGHAM, 2011. ESTIMA IS A MASTER OF THE OPEN GUARD, POSSESSING DEVASTATING TRIANGLE ATTACKS AND HIGH-FLYING SWEEPS.



HIS AVERAGE MATCH LENGTH WAS APPROXIMATELY

7 MINUTES 48 SECS

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'It's Science' is brought to you by BishopBjj.com. The goal of BishopBjj.com is to expand and empower the jiu jitsu community by emphasising the science and art of jiu jitsu in fun and exciting ways. We want to highlight what makes jiu jitsu so calculated, but also what makes it so much fun.

71%

OF BRAULIO'S SUBMISSIONS WERE CHOKES FROM THE BACK

BRAULIO HAD A 23/7 "SWEEP/ PASS RATIO"

50%

OF BRAULIO'S WINS ENDED VIA A SUBMISSION

93%

OF BRAULIO'S MATCHES ENDED IN VICTORY

BRAULIO SCORED FIRST IN 13 OF THE 14 WINNING MATCHES

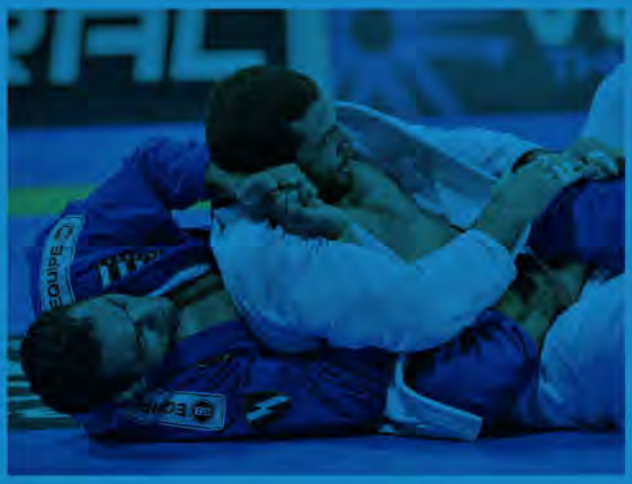
60%

OF BRAULIO'S PASSES WERE FROM SPIDER OR X-GUARD

ABSTRACT:

All matches observed of Braulio Estima used in this small sample occurred at IBJJF events, inside his weight division, and in the years 2011-2014. Only techniques, occurrences, and outcomes that were recorded are displayed in the data below (i.e. if no butterfly sweeps occurred there will not be a representation of that in the sample data charts). Matches were selected at random based on freely available matches. This is a limited sample but - given the estimated amount of matches in this time period - it is well above the percentage necessary to create a scientifically validated trend sampling.

NUMBER OF MATCHES OBSERVED	15
TOTAL MINUTES OBSERVED	118
MATCHES WON BY SUBMISSION	07
MATCHES WON BY POINTS	07
OPPONENT WON MATCH	01
TOTAL MATCHES DRAWN	00
TOTAL MATCHES WON	14



THE BREAKDOWN

There may not currently be a more controversial figure in competition jiu jitsu than Braulio Estima. The multi-time world champion recently tested positive for DMAA, a banned substance according to the World Anti-Doping Association, and has since been catapulted to the centre of many discussions regarding jiu jitsu competition reform. It's appropriate that someone like Estima is embroiled in this type of controversy as he is recognised as one of today's most accomplished competitors. Known for stunning technique and a sporty showmanship, Estima has a style that is completely his own.

While Estima's style is unique, you will ultimately see some patterns in his game just like most of our previous subjects. The primary difference is in the variety of ways in which he executes specific techniques. We recorded more positional variation with Estima than in any past studies of other top competitors.

Estima had a 93% win percentage in our sample. Additionally, he scored first in 13 of 14 of those wins. He also recorded a high-mark for total sweeps among the studies we have conducted using 15 matches or less (23 in total). That's an average of 1.53 sweeps per match, the highest we've ever recorded. You see this occur a lot with Braulio because he pushes the action. He'll take an unstable sweep, come to the top position to capitalise, and - with nothing to take advantage of - ultimately concede the top position to try his hand again.

There is a lot of spider guard and X-guard sprinkled into Estima's notorious guard game. Approximately 60% of his sweeps and attacks came from a spider or X-guard variation. And while there are a lot of moving parts to Braulio's bottom game, his top game is slightly less complex; something we've seen often among top competitors. Braulio prefers a heavy and compact style of passing, favouring a knee over or double-unders style of pass nearly 71% of the time. He recorded a measly 7 passes in the sample. However, it's important to note that Braulio uses the guard pass beautifully as an immediate transition to his opponent's back. It's common to see him use a double-unders pass to secure his opponent's back.

In our study Estima submitted an amazing 50% of his opponents in his winning efforts. These were mostly chokes from the back with an occasional highlight reel kneebar and triangle thrown in for good measure. As previously stated, Braulio masterfully combines his guard passing and guard work into a bevy of submission attacks. You would be hard-pressed to find another competitor as dangerous at all times as Braulio Estima.

Ultimately, there are no questions about Braulio Estima's record, technique, or talent. He is one of the best in the world. This is evident by his stats and competition record. The recent conversations regarding his integrity is one we cannot answer with numbers and film study; that is best left to friends and teammates. The sport of jiu jitsu is in the middle of a reformation, and Estima's recent incident should be a wake-up call to everyone competing at a high-level in competition jiu jitsu today.

BRAULIO HAD THE HIGHEST SWEEP TOTAL IN ANY STUDY WE HAVE EVER CONDUCTED (23 STUDIES, 15 MATCHES OR LESS) – 1.53 SWEEPS PER MATCH AVERAGE

SWEEP (POSITION)

DE LA RIVA	2
SPIDER SWEEPS	9
CLOSED GUARD	1
HALF GUARD	3
SIT-UP GUARD	1
50/50	2
X GUARD	5

SWEEP (TYPE)

ANKLE PICK SWEEP	1
TOMANAGI	5
DEEP HALF	1
TRIPS/OFF BALANCE	3
SIT-UP AND OVERTAKE OPPONENT	2
BERIMBOLO	1
COLLAR DRAG/ARM DRAG	2
HOOK SWEEP	1
X-GUARD (OR SINGLE X)	7

PASS (POSITION)

ON KNEES	3
HALF-GUARD	3
STANDING	1

PASS (TYPE)

LEG DRAG	1
KNEE OVER	3
LEG WEAVE PASS	2
UNDER THE LEGS	1

TAKING THE BACK

HALF GUARD TOP	3
FROM PASSING THE GUARD	3
GUARD	1

SUBMISSION (POSITION)

BACK	5
SPIDER	2

SUBMISSION (TYPE)

CHOKE FROM BACK	5
LEG LOCK	1
TRIANGLE	1

CONCLUSIONS

AVOIDED: STANDING PASSES & THE MOUNT

SUCCESSES : SPIDER GUARD, BACK CHOKES

TOP TECH 1: X-GUARD SWEEP

TOP TECH 2: BACK TAKE FROM GUARD PASS

HISTORY 101: TEAM CHECKMAT

Leonardo Vieira, the eldest of three brothers, began training jiu jitsu at eight years old. By 2002, the Vieira brothers were under Alliance, but the team was infamously about to crack. For his part, Vieira never wanted nor expected to leave Alliance, having seen Romero 'Jacare' Cavalcanti as a father figure. When Jacare told him he had to go, Vieira remembered on Open Mat Radio how "that was a shock."

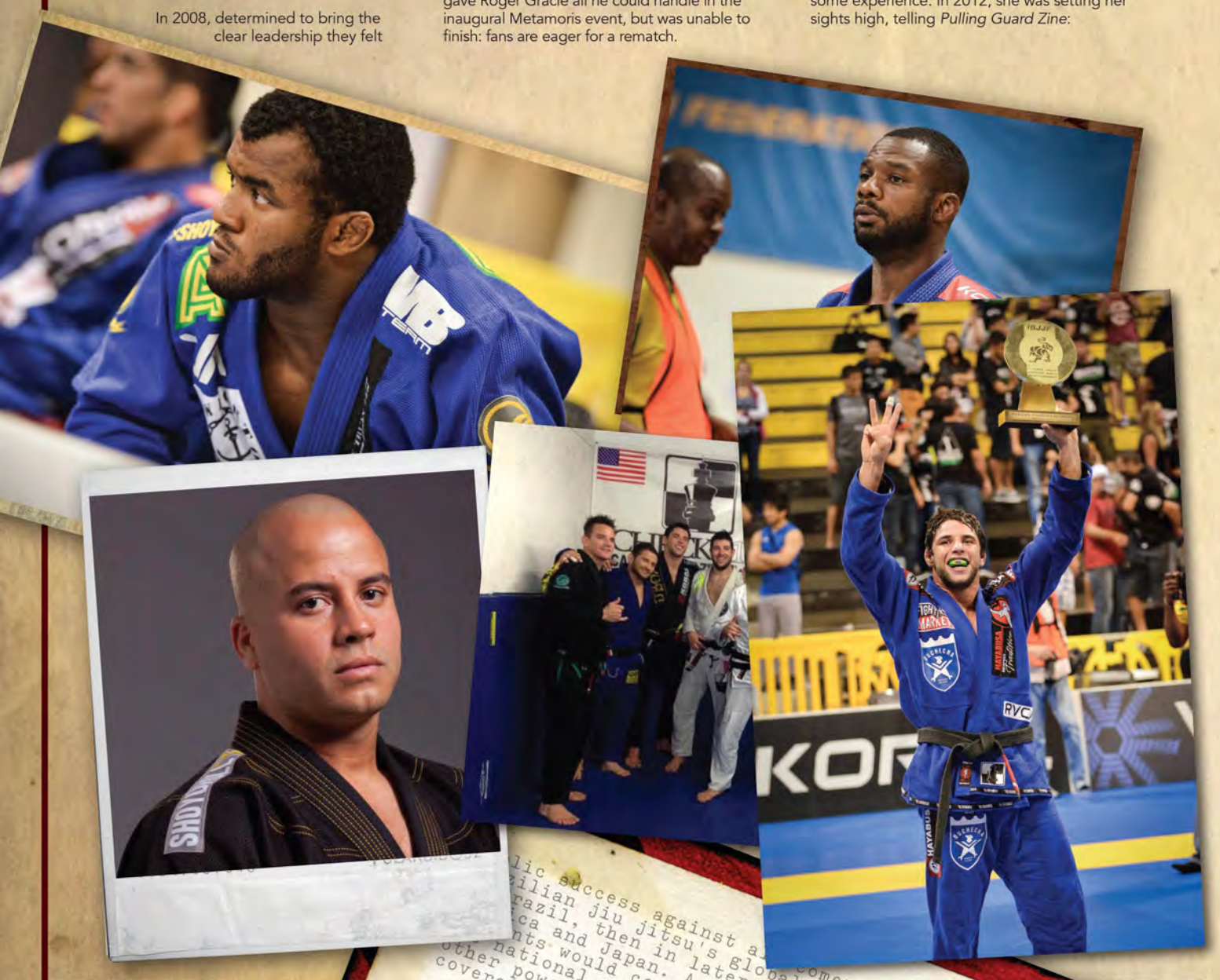
The desire of Alliance's top competitors to compete for prize money in the CBJJO had many consequences. Initially this led to the formation of a new Master Team, a name from an earlier incarnation of Alliance. After their ex-team mates attempted to take credit, the second Master Team became Brasa. That group had a concentration of not only numerous top athletes, but strong personalities as well. A further split was, arguably, inevitable.

In 2008, determined to bring the clear leadership they felt had been lacking, Leo and his brothers created a new team. Punningly named Checkmat (born out of Leozinho's interest in chess), it has proved very successful ever since. For a start, the current reigning star of Brazilian Jiu Jitsu competition, Marcus 'Buchecha' Almeida, is a Checkmat fighter. Born on the 8th January 1990 in Sao Vicente, Buchecha has accomplished the incredible feat of winning both his Mundials weight division (+100kg) and the absolute three years in a row, from 2012 to 2014.

Buchecha's nickname means 'cheeks' in Portuguese, apparently earned when he first started training and possessed a considerably less trim physique. He was preceded into jiu jitsu by his sister, then his father. Buchecha himself stepped onto the mats as a teenager, earning his black belt on the 2010 Mundials podium. In what many have seen as a changing of the guard, he gave Roger Gracie all he could handle in the inaugural Metamoris event, but was unable to finish: fans are eager for a rematch.

The spectre of those earlier Alliance and Brasa splits still loomed overhead, as Checkmat had its own split in 2013. Buchecha's instructor, Rodrigo Cavaca, left to form Zenith together with Robert Drysdale, taking a large number of schools and students with him. That did not include Buchecha, who remained with Checkmat. Although she had close connections to both Drysdale and Cavaca, Michelle Nicolini also decided to stay loyal to Checkmat.

Having begun her training at 17, Nicolini received her black belt from Drysdale and trained at Cavaca's school until 2013. She won gold at the 2012 Mundials in the -59kg division, then as if that wasn't impressive enough, jumped up several weight categories to win it again in the -74kg a year later. Like many top BJJ athletes, Nicolini is now transitioning to mixed martial arts, where she's already had some experience. In 2012, she was setting her sights high, telling *Pulling Guard Zine*:



"There is an American girl who thinks she is the best, who talks a lot, who takes clothes off to try to promote herself. She doesn't want to promote the sport, she wants to promote herself. I am very excited to see Cris Cyborg punching her face."

Cyborg has yet to get the opportunity, but with her new focus, Nicolini might one day find herself across the cage from that American. Fortunately for BJJ, she is not abandoning our sport completely, with plans to defend her title at the 2015 ADCC. She was also one half of what remains the sole women's fight at Metamoris: hopefully she will be gracing those mats again in future too. For the moment, Nicolini is set to face Angelica Galvao at January's Polaris sub-only event in Cardiff.

Checkmat has expanded around the world, with an especially strong presence in Europe. While it does not yet match the broad spread of Gracie Barra, Checkmat schools can be found all over Europe. In the UK, Luiz Ribeiro heads up London Fight Factory. In France, the three Olivier brothers run Gokudo BJJ. Across to the East, Burak Deger Bicer has pioneered the sport in Turkey: he already has multiple affiliates.

Checkmat has been particularly successful in the land of the Vikings, where home-grown talent has shone through. As a result, Checkmat can boast of multiple elite non-Brazilian black belt competitors. A good number of them were carefully cultivated by a Danish man, who back in 2002 was still a Wing Tsun enthusiast. The year of the Alliance split, Shimon Mochizuki (born to a Danish mother and Japanese father) heard about something called Brazilian jiu jitsu.

He began travelling to Malmo in Sweden to learn the art from Peter Blackwell, who was then still under Alliance. That network would later expand to Copenhagen, but when Blackwell left Denmark, Mochizuki took over the school as a purple belt. He earned his black belt from Leo Vieira in 2008, becoming the first ever Danish black belt in the process.

Two of Mochizuki's stand-out students emerged from the same gym in Sweden, Paul Persson's Samurai JJK in Jonkoping, where both Janni Larsson and Ida Hansson began their martial arts training. In 2010, Larsson moved to Mochizuki's Arte Suave school in Copenhagen. That triggered a series of impressive victories, including second place at the German Open. Unexpectedly, Larsson earned her silver medal in the men's division. As soon as she received her black belt from Mochizuki in 2014, she went on to win her category at the Mundials.

In terms of men, Alexander Trans from Denmark is among the most successful male black belts from Europe so far. He won the Mundials and the Pan Americans at brown in 2011 (both in his weight division and the absolute), going on to secure gold as a black belt at the Brasileiros the following year. The big Dane has been training since he was 15 years old, then in 2009 he also headed to Arte Suave.

Checkmat looks set to keep growing, with big names like Buchecha still young and hungry for more success. It also looks to be a sure-fire bet for more non-Brazilian champions, helping to diversify the podium by loosening that Brazilian grip on gold.

TIMELINE

1976
Leo Vieira is born, the eldest of three brothers. Ricardo arrives in 1979, Leandro in 1981

1986
The brothers begin training under Romero 'Jacare' Cavalcanti

1996
Leo wins his brown belt division at the first Mundials

2002
Several black belts split off from Alliance to form Master Team, which then becomes Brasa

2003
Leo wins gold at the ADCC

2005
Leo becomes ADCC champion for the second time

2008
The Vieira brothers and several of their students split from Brasa to form Checkmat

2009
Purple belt Janni Larsson moves to Copenhagen to study medicine

2011
Leo shows he's still got it with a silver at the ADCC

2012
Buchecha wins the first of his three weight and absolute double golds at the Mundials

2013
Rodrigo Cavaca and Robert Drysdale split from Checkmat to form Zenith

2014
Janni Larsson wins her black belt division at the Mundials

SOURCES: WWW.BJJHEROES.COM WWW.BJJSCANDINAVIA.COM WWW.BJJNEWS.DK WWW.CHECKMATBJJ.COM WWW.OPENMATRADIO.COM WWW.VIEIRABROS.COM WWW.SLIDEYFOOT.COM WWW.IDAHANSSONBJJ.COM WWW.BJJFORUM.COM.BR WWW.PULLINGGUARDZINE.COM

ALAIN POZO'S FIGHT CLUB

CARLSON GRACIE ESSEX HEAD INSTRUCTOR, ALAIN POZO, HAS HAD A PRETTY EPIC JIU JITSU JOURNEY. AFTER 16 YEARS OF TRAINING IN BRAZIL, USA AND THE UK, POZO WAS AWARDED HIS BLACK BELT UNDER WILSON JUNIOR, AND NOW HEADS UP ONE OF THE MOST PROMISING POOLS OF TALENTED YOUNG ATHLETES IN GREAT BRITAIN.

His stable of fighters already boasts world and European champions, with many standouts still in their teens or early twenties. We caught up with Alain at his Colchester academy to see his group of fighters in action first-hand and discuss his transition from 'regular guy' into full-time jiu jitsu coach.

Hey Alain, thanks for talking to us! So, when did your journey begin?

Well it had nothing to do with Royce Gracie or the UFC. I started with Ze Radiola, who is a very well-known instructor from my hometown of Recife. Ze started teaching when he was a blue belt in what was pretty much a shack with mats laid down on the floor. It was a tiny little space in his backyard. Ze had a brown belt who used to teach there called Charles dos Anjos, and that was when I first starting to train, back in 1998.

So how did you end up in the UK?

I came to the UK in 2001, but I then moved to the US for a while. I wanted to train jiu jitsu so bad, that's all I wanted to do. I got a job washing dishes in Chelsea, as I wanted the least amount of responsibility I could possibly have. The guys in the restaurant were really confused - they were like, 'do you study?' and I'd just say 'no, I just want to be a dishwasher man'. I just didn't want any responsibility, I just wanted to train.

Anyway, it didn't go well really, as I had lots of pressure to do 'normal' things: get a job and become a regular person. For a while I abandoned my dreams, you know. I ended up moving to the US and started a new life. I got the car, I got the regular job, and I was just not enjoying it. I was looking at the clock every five minutes at work waiting to go and train. Training was an obsession. I stayed for four years in that lifestyle of working in the US. Some people say that's normal, but that's not normal man. Humans aren't supposed to sit down in an office for eight hours a day. Finally, I quit everything, left everything behind in America and came back to the UK. I didn't even sell my car - I just left.

When I came back to the UK in April 2009 I said to myself, 'I will never get another job again in my life'. I said I'd rather be homeless than work another day, and I never have worked since.

That's amazing! So it's probably fair to say you've had some interesting early BJJ experiences here in the UK?

When I came back in 2009, all of my friends that had been in the UK before I left for the US were making a living through jiu jitsu. Guys had gyms, guys were creating jiu jitsu brands – it was crazy.

I had some savings, but I couldn't get a job because I just wanted to train, so I moved to a friend's gym in East London. I lived in the gym for, I think, 10 months. In that gym is where I met Claudio Silva, a great friend of mine, and my wife Sarah. When I met these people I had nothing, and I was running out of my savings.

Claudio and I used to go to Brick Lane to buy a kebab to share for dinner, so it was tough, but we always believed something would happen for us. It was Claudio that first gave me the opportunity to teach in Colchester.

And you've been teaching in Colchester ever since?

Yes. I used to only come here twice a week, but the guys really liked my class. When I first started there were literally only two people in the class – one little girl and a ripped guy (laughs). It was actually difficult when I first used to come down and teach with such low numbers coming to train in my class.

After a while the guys who ran the gym said they were interested in having me teach four times a week, which was obviously great. When they asked me to teach four days a week, I asked if I could sleep in the gym. So, I stayed in the gym from Monday to Thursday, then I'd go back to London on Thursday night to see Sarah and to train over the weekend.

So things went on like this for a while until the classes started to pick up a little bit, but one day about 30 teenagers showed up out of nowhere. I asked them why they'd all come to train and it turned out they'd watched an MMA movie called *Never Back Down* – then they said they all had to train MMA. That was the start of things really, when it began to get busy at the academy. These kids started as youngsters, teenagers, and now they are young adults training really hard.

It must be very satisfying to see your students blossom from kids into top competitors, as you have a very successful team now?

I am very, very proud, but there are a lot of people that I have to thank for this. First of all my students, Claudio Silva, my wife Sarah, as well as all the guys at Carlson Gracie London: Simon Hayes, Dickie Martin and Wilson Junior. Also my friend Edu Goncalves who opened his doors and lets our guys train in London. It would have been impossible without these guys. It's been a lot of hard work, and I haven't had a holiday in five years, but it never feels like I'm at work. It's a great lifestyle.

What advice would you give to someone running kids' classes?

I think kids classes cannot be that serious, they should be fun. I don't agree with parents pushing their kids too hard – I see parents literally screaming at their kids at competitions. I think kids should be kids, so we don't push them too hard here. We do lots of agility exercises with them and do lots of games. Actually, about 40 minutes of our kids' class is agility work and games, then 20 minutes of technique and training.

Your journey to black belt was pretty epic, so tell us a little bit about your path to faixa preta and your life as a competitor.

Well, I had been training for 16 years when I got my black belt. No matter what people say, if you do compete,your game progresses quicker. I know lots of guys that don't compete that are really good, but I can't imagine being as motivated as I am now if I didn't compete.

I think it's important to compete in front of your friends, your students, your teachers, so that you feel a little bit of pressure to perform. It makes you push yourself harder when you're training. This applies with my students, but I never push anyone to say that they have to win medals; it's all about stepping on the mat.

You have world and European champions among your students already, but how long do you think it will be before we see a UK bred black belt world champion in the adult division?

I have a goal, which I have set to achieve within five years. We already have fantastic British black belts, but I believe in five years we will have this generation of kids that I'm teaching competing and winning at the top level of our sport. I have high expectations, so if I read this article in the magazine five years from now and it hasn't happened, then I need to work much harder.

You've been around the UK scene for a while, so it's fair to say you've had some great experiences?

When I started training jiu jitsu I wasn't thinking about teaching or making money, I simply wanted to train for the love of jiu jitsu. I remember Royce Gracie wanted to fight Wilson (Junior) at an early tournament here in the UK. Marc Walder brought Royce Gracie over to the UK and him and Wilson got into a big argument.

I also remember watching Roberto Atalla fighting Alex De Souza in a 30 minute MMA fight down in Bournemouth. They were throwing head-butts and crazy stuff like that. So yeah, I guess I've seen some crazy things while I've been here.

During this whole time I was just a student training in the UK. It's only in the last 5 years that I've been teaching really. I think a lot of people rush in to being an instructor - they want to be an instructor straight away. I believe you have to go through the grind and gain experience before you can really be a good instructor.

What advice would you give to someone looking to leave their 'normal' life behind, as you did, and live through jiu jitsu?

The main thing is that you have to believe in what you are doing 100%. You have to be a fanatic. If you're not a fanatic, then this isn't for you. If you wanted to be a volleyball coach, you'd have to sit and watch volleyball tapes all day. Some people say stuff like, 'ah man, that guy is annoying, he is always talking about jiu jitsu'. I only talk about jiu jitsu. That's it - I'm a fanatic. You have to set up a goal and chase it, be it becoming a world champion or running a successful school. I have my goal written down and I read it every morning when I wake up and every night before I go to bed. There's no breaks, there's no holidays, you have to stick to your goals 100% and give it your full attention if you want to be successful.

Thanks for your time Alain, is there anyone you'd like to thank or mention?

I want to thank you Callum, I believe you are doing an amazing job for jiu jitsu with the magazine and I appreciate you coming down to train with us!

ARYA ESFANDMAZ & NATALIA CARRIELLO

BROWN BELTS AND ACTIVE COMPETITORS ON THE EUROPEAN STAGE, ARYA ESFANDMAZ AND NATALIA CARRIELLO EAT, SLEEP AND BREATHE BJJ. WE CAUGHT UP WITH THE LONDON BASED COUPLE TO DISCUSS TRAINING AROUND THE CLOCK, TRAINING TOGETHER AND, GUESS WHAT, TRAINING EVEN MORE.

For those who aren't sure, Arya, can you briefly tell us how you got to where you are today?

ARYA: So when I was a kid, I was always different and I got bullied a lot. We're talking reception class young. My dad was a wrestler, he tried to enrol me in wrestling but there wasn't much in this country, so he signed me up to judo at the Budokwai and that's pretty much where it started.

I stopped, but returned to it in my teenage years before moving to live in Korea for a while. I was trying a lot of different stuff before I started grappling a lot in late 2008. MMA was pretty big for me at the time but then I fell in love with jiu jitsu. I used to actually fight Japanese grapplers, they would come to my gym.

It's a funny story, those grapplers used to paint their nails black so I started to do it as well. Now I still do it and everyone keeps asking why. That's when I started training jiu jitsu more and more. Now I find myself eating, sleeping and breathing jiu jitsu.

My style is that I don't like to be boring, I didn't even know points until I got to late blue belt. In all my fights I like to finish stuff, try to avoid being boring. When I win on points I get pretty upset, I like to be flashy that's why I'll go five, six, seven fights in a row trying flashy submissions. In 2012, my first fight in the Pan Ams, I finished a fight in thirteen seconds with a flying armbar. Yeah, I like to study and I'm in love with this sh*t.

Would you say that's your motivation to train then? The Love?

ARYA: To be honest, I would say my motivation to train is to be one of the best in the world because, I guess, it's a lot to do with the way I grew up. I was bullied a lot, but no, my motivation is to be strong. I'd rather lose than hold on to an advantage.

In the Worlds this year, I lost in the quarter final by a really bad advantage, I mean, I had spider guard, he went to the side, but I had my hooks in. Anyway, the ref gave the advantage no penalty to the other guy for just holding me for four minutes. So he won like that and I was like, 'Man! I'm never going to be that guy!' The guy was really strong, so I've been hitting the weights a lot. But yeah, my motivation is to be remembered for doing cool stuff and not being boring.

Well you're definitely not boring Arya! Can you remember the first time you nailed a flying submission, the style you're known for?

ARYA: [Laughs] Man, I was trying flying submissions even in my Judo days! I remember actually, we were doing newaza, which is ground work, and I'd been trying mini flying armbars from the floor and stuff. I was sixteen, one of the coaches there, who's now a blue belt under Carlson Gracie, we laugh every time we see each other. Yeah, I've always tried it since then, I think I was high on Donnie Yen films, he was a purple belt in jiu jitsu and doing flying arm bars and stuff. Maybe it even goes back to being bullied. My friends and me used to watch Japanese MMA, and these guys did crazy stuff. I used to do flips too, free running and stuff and we tried that stuff. I've got footage of me at sixteen doing it! I remember the final of the British Open 2011 – I had already had four fights. I was tired when my fifth match came - and I just went for it. I was very happy with that flying finish.

It's funny, when I got to brown belt, in every comp I've tried a flying/rolling kneebar and it hasn't worked. I tried it on Nelson Pontes in the final of the British Open this year, I nearly got it, but it's pretty cool. I'll get it one day though.

Is that a 'mark my words' then?

ARYA: It is! On this day ... [laughs]

You spend a lot of time with Lagarto both on and off the mat, so what's it like having him around?

ARYA: I've got to admit something; I spoke to you late just now because Lagarto said 'let's roll'. It's so exciting and I don't mean to be big headed but he's the only guy who kicks my ass so badly. He's so heavy! He's cool man, he always shares his knowledge with us. You know what, Lagarto just text my girlfriend right now saying how he 'kicked my ass today'. No, it's awesome being under him, without sounding like a kiddy, but it's like a dream come true. He's a champion on and off the mat, he helps me a lot and he's such a cool guy.

Natalia! The other half of this brown belt couple! Again, can you tell people your story?

NATALIA: Basically, I never grappled before trying jiu jitsu when my dad introduced me to it. At the beginning, I started very slow, as I was still adapting and didn't speak English at all. I did two classes a week and took it really slow but then, I just loved it. One day it just clicked and I just started to love it. All the classes, all the time.

ARYA: That only happened when I came to the gym!

NATALIA: Trust me it wasn't! Anyway [laughs], I started helping out and learnt so many cool things from my dad. When I started beating up the guys that was an amazing feeling, oh my god! It made me feel happy about jiu jitsu, it showed me that it really worked. This wasn't play fighting with my dad, this was beating up a boy!

I started loving teaching as well. I was seeing things differently; when you teach you learn a lot. I started teaching the white belts and new people.

A lot of people say that teaching regularly changes things.

NATALIA: It's amazing, you open your mind to different things. When I'm showing a technique, I have to make sure I know the answers to everything. I had to open my mind to the position and I need to know how to apply it. It opened my mind to a whole new level of jiu jitsu.

Was it something you always wanted to do?

NATALIA: It was my Dad who introduced me to the teaching. He did a great job of that because I really appreciate that I do it now.

ARYA: Then why do you suck so much! She talks so much, let me tell you, she'll be explaining all the details whilst holding the choke on! I'm like 'Hello! I'm going to sleep here!'

Nat, can you show us that choke again please?

NATALIA: Yeah! Absolutely, come to my class and I'll show you the choke.

Obviously, your father is Eduardo, third degree black belt from Gracie Barra London Bridge, and very well respected. What was it like growing up with a father with such roots in the sport?

NATALIA: When I first came to this country I was always showing off like 'my dad's a black belt!', but I'd never done grappling, I liked football when I was young. When I came to England and started to do BJJ though, I was well aware that my dad was the black belt. I pushed myself a little bit too hard, I'd put pressure on myself and always wanted to be the best in the gym. I frustrated myself so many times, but that happens. I was just trying, thinking, I'm his daughter but I'm not going to get to that level.

Did you find that jiu jitsu helped you settle in a new place?

NATALIA: Definitely. It helped me with everything. I used to go to the classes and I couldn't understand anything and people used to come to me, being friendly, they started to talk to me, explain stuff, it really helped me and now it's a big part of my life.

It is for both of you. You both train full time?

ARYA: I live in the gym!

NATALIA: Yeah, I'm just coming back from surgery so I'm slowly training and working out. It'll be a couple of weeks.

Living in London with so much talent around you, you've lots of people to train with and you train full time. What tips would you have for people who want to train that much but struggle to find a balance with other commitments?

ARYA: I would say, there's always time for jiu jitsu. I tell everyone, it's like a disease, once it's into you then it grows. What Natalia and me want to do may be different, but I can't remember the last time I went out to see my friends outside of my training circle. You meet so many different people, but on the mats everyone is equal. You meet people you'd never meet in the world. It's kind of like a portal of awesomeness.

NATALIA: When I need to train that little bit harder, I sometimes need that extra push. There's always two voices; one that tells you to 'go and forget about everything, just go' and the other that says 'you don't need to go, you could do something else'. You should always listen to the

"AS LONG AS I'VE GOT GOOD TRAINING PARTNERS AND PEOPLE AROUND ME I'LL CONTINUE TO BE VERY HAPPY. I'LL BE HONEST, I DON'T THINK ABOUT ANYTHING ELSE, SOME PEOPLE DON'T UNDERSTAND BUT IT'S JUST ME" - ARYA ESFANDMAZ

one that says 'just go' and don't think twice. Do it, you may feel tired, but you're not going to regret that.

There's an idea of the jiu jitsu lifestyle, but you guys show that you don't need to be on a beach, training after surfing etc. It would be nice, but you don't need to do that to live it. What's the lifestyle to you?

ARYA: Lagarto tells me stories, he says 'Bro, you don't know! I used to go to the beach, surf, go get my coconut water'. But I say 'Man, I don't need no beach. As long as I got jiu jitsu I don't need the beach'. Jiu jitsu is my beach!

As long as I've got good training partners and people around me I'll continue to be very happy. I'll be honest, I don't think about anything else, some people don't understand but it's just me, I'm into jiu jitsu, even when I finished university I had to tell my family that.

And with that infectious bug that we all love, did you ever find it hard to strike the balance between studying and training?

ARYA: [Laughs] Bro it was really bad. I was at University in Korea, I used to go in early and then just spend like half the day travelling to train. I was really bad! It's hard to study and train but it depends on the person.

NATALIA: I don't find it difficult to find the time. You can always wake up a bit earlier or go to sleep a little bit later. It's like the same thing I said before, when you have the option to go, that's how it works for me.

ARYA: That's the beautiful thing about jiu jitsu, it's so frickin' effective. When you go to jiu jitsu, you go 100% and not hurt your partner and know how effective it is. How many times did I go to Lagarto and try and rip off his head without hurting him? That's jiu jitsu.

NATALIA: Especially for me. I'm quite short and quite light as well. Pretty much everyone that I spar with is bigger than me by at least 10kg. I have to find things out, from white belts to black belts, they have different games and I had to figure things out, how to defend myself and how to attack in different ways. It's because I'm lighter and quite lazy as well, I can move really fast but most of the time I don't, I use a lot of technique to do stuff.

As a couple, do you find that training together helps?

ARYA: It's a funny story. Before we even started going out we used to grapple. The first time she came over we ended up grappling in my room – but it was all jiu jitsu stuff! We'll be together and one ends up sneakily grappling, trying an arm triangle and stuff. It definitely helps! It does get annoying, she's competitive, she's got little man syndrome, but yeah it's helps.

Can you have a lazy day when the other knows you should be training?

ARYA: To be honest, I think we both have the motivation. For me, when I don't train for a day I start feeling down because I know I should be there. With Natalia, I think she's even worse. She wants to train with a ripped meniscus and I'm like 'Natalia, are you crazy?' [laughs].

Do you find you inspire each other then?

ARYA: I know I definitely inspire her [laughs]. She loves me - I'm her hero.

NATALIA: Oh right, it's actually completely the opposite!

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TOM CALLOS TALKS...
THE BUSINESS OF BJJ

It is with no small amount of pleasure that I write this, my first advice column for Jiu Jitsu Style magazine. My name is Tom Callos, I've been involved in and practising the martial arts for more than 40 years. My first class came from a judo teacher who invited me onto his mat in 1969. I started studying taekwondo in 1971, earned my 1st degree black belt in 1979, and was awarded my 7th dan in 2014. It was 22 years ago now that I took my first Brazilian jiu jitsu lesson with Cesar Gracie and this last year I finally earned my brown belt. Along the way in my martial arts journey I've had the good fortune to be the first teacher and/or coach for some very fine practitioners, including The Prodigy, BJ Penn, his brother Reagan Penn, and my stepson, BJJ phenom Keenan Cornelius.

At 55 years of age I'd say I'm a decent older BJJ player, but while I'm no Keenan, all my years of hanging out in the martial arts lifestyle have left me with some very specific and highly polished skills. My martial arts speciality is in business. Specifically, I am an expert at the business of brilliant, ethical, and profitable martial arts school management.

For most of my adult life I've been running schools and/or sharing what I know about building extraordinary martial arts programs and academies with other school owners, teachers, and their staff members. Much of my hands-on experience came in the 1980's and 90's when I ran two uber-successful schools in Reno, Nevada. It was noteworthy success in those and other schools that has allowed me to become a helper to other school owners and teachers who want to make a healthy living doing what they love to do the most.

This and subsequent columns will predominantly be about the business of teaching, school marketing, student service, and school management, but undoubtedly I'll add the occasional anecdote and/or half-truth about BJ Penn, Keenan, and my other many friends in the martial arts community.

To get the school management advice rolling, I offer you the following six titbits of information, themes that will be the subject of many columns to come.

— Besides teaching outstanding classes, classes of substance, brilliance, the basics, and wisdom, the school owner and/or teacher has two other primary job duties. These duties revolve around two distinctly different, but intimately connected subjects: SALES and SERVICE. If you master the art of selling what you do and then the art of genuinely and masterfully providing student service, your academy will prosper. If you fail to become proficient at these two aspects of school management, you (and subsequently, your academy) will suffer.

"EXPERT SCHOOL MANAGEMENT, LIKE BJJ, ISN'T SOMETHING YOU LEARN IN A DAY, A WEEK, A MONTH, OR AT A SEMINAR; IT'S AN ON-GOING DIALOGUE"

— The best marketing is the kind that is driven by a sense of mission; I call it "mission-based marketing." When a school owner is out there talking the talk of his or her work with a sense of purpose, with a meaningful intent, with something to accomplish that's sane, sound, and important, then marketing becomes a thing of beauty, a thing of the spirit. When marketing isn't driven by a noble purpose, a mission, then it's the exact same marketing as anyone can do. It's the exact same kind of marketing almost everyone will do, but it isn't brilliant or defining or a thing of wonder. The best kind of marketing is the kind that isn't marketing at all, but something you do because it causes you to jump out of bed in the morning, ready to make a difference, ready to heed the calling of a higher purpose.

My job as a consultant is to find what my clients really care about - and then help them promote their life's work, their sense of mission, to show their community what they have, what they do that's of the most value. Working with passion is where it's at, as working without a sense of mission is just making a job for yourself, and doing that is like chewing on yesterday's gum.

— Big accomplishments come out of many small action steps. When managing a school like a master, it will be the little things, the hour-by-hour, day-by-day, and week-by-week things that make or break the effort. In the art of school management, what you know matters far less than what you practise. Expert school management, like BJJ, isn't something you learn in a day, a week, a month, or at a seminar; it's an on-going dialogue, a day by day practise; you do it, then you get up the next day and you do it again. The devil is in the details.

— We, in my opinion, must move from a promise-based industry to an evidence-based industry. Every school owner and teacher under the sun promises the benefits of martial arts training, but very few have any real, documented evidence of what their work on the mat becomes when students take it "out of the dojo and into the world."

— There are 4 kinds of marketing and promotion a school owner can do:

A. DUMB-A** MARKETING.
B. GOOD MARKETING.
C. GREAT MARKETING.
D. INGENIOUS MARKETING.

Dumb-a** marketing is, well, just plain stupid --and doing it degrades your image as a teacher and a professional.

Good marketing is the kind of promotion that anyone, absolutely anyone could do, such as passing out business cards, guest passes, or putting up flyers.

Great marketing takes a bit of leverage and/or intelligence. For example, if it's good to pass out a business card to a potential student, it's great to impress a community leader enough that he or she offers to pass out cards to his or her circle of friends.

Ingenious marketing is flat-out brilliant, it requires someone with a brain to execute it, it takes some construction, some patience, and the ability to put together marketing campaigns well beyond the ability or wherewithal of the uninformed, lazy, or inexperienced school owner.

— The sooner you get this, the more powerful and progressive you'll become as a school owner: *You are your own media company.* As a media company, you have four primary forms of communicating what you do, what makes you special, to the general public.

1. THE SPOKEN WORD.
2. THE WRITTEN WORD.
3. VIDEO.
4. IMAGES AND MODIFIED IMAGES.

I've found ESP and mental telepathy to be completely ineffective ways to communicate what you do to your community, despite the fact that so many instructors think people just "know" about their work. Learning to communicate the benefits of your work, the things that make your work so darn good, to the people who might come and pay for your lessons is a job duty most often ignored by the school owner and his or her team -and it kills schools that would otherwise prosper.

There so many things I intend to share with you in the coming months; I hope you'll tune in here to my Jiu Jitsu Style column and let me help you get your dojo game on.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tom Callos heads the martial arts school consulting think-tank, The 100. Method (www.the100.us). He resides in-between Hilo, Hawaii and Auburn, California.

RYAN HALL

THE LIFE OF A FIGHTER IS NOT AN EASY ONE. BEHIND ANY GLAMOUR THAT MAY SEEM TO EXIST FIGHTERS FACE HOURS OF GRUELING HARD WORK, EXHAUSTION, PAIN, FRUSTRATION, FASTING AND DEHYDRATION THAT SLOWLY WEARS ON THEIR MINDS AND TESTS THEIR RESOLVE AS THEY CHASE THEIR GOALS.

GRAPPLER | FIGHTER | TEACHER

RYAN HALL: MR. 50/50

As with most things in life, motivations vary from person to person and the clichés with which we are so familiar go only so far in illuminating the truth of the matter. Some fight for notoriety, some for the thrill; others seek fortune or even simply the ability to meet next month's bills. On rarer occasions though, an individual who otherwise would have no need to risk their long-term health with little promise of financial reward elects to compete in the pursuit of something different: honest expression and the self-knowledge that only a crucible of skill and determination can provide.

Ryan Hall falls into this last category. The American grappler began training a decade ago while in college, and after a few months decided to leave school in pursuit of martial arts knowledge rather than stick with the security of an engineering degree. He has gone on to become one of the most influential Brazilian jiu jitsu practitioners in the world and one of the most accomplished American competitors of his generation. Best known for his cerebral approach to training and fighting, he owns and operates Fifty/50 Jiu-Jitsu in Falls Church, Virginia and is widely recognised for his contributions towards popularising the 50/50 position and a conceptual approach to teaching the martial arts. Now a full-time Mixed Martial Artist, Hall is trying to take his jiu jitsu base and improved striking and wrestling skills all the way to the UFC, the pinnacle of MMA.

"JIU JITSU WAS – AND CONTINUES TO BE – AN INCREDIBLE JOURNEY FOR ME, BUT IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN A MEANS TO AN END. IT'S TIME TO TAKE THE NEXT STEP"

When asked questions his answers are articulate, measured, thoughtful and full of introspection. He speaks his mind with a serious conviction that is both intense and heartfelt, giving credit where credit is due and never mincing words when it isn't. As Hall says, "The true litmus test for how martial arts work is a limited rules format. Jiu jitsu was - and continues to be - an incredible journey for me, but it has always been a means to an end. It's time to take the next step."

Hall began training in BJJ as a skinny kid from the suburbs who wanted to learn how to fight - and has had more success and a crazier journey than he could have imagined at the start. Here's some insight into the person behind the blinking.

GETTING HOOKED ON BRAZILIAN JIU JITSU

Ryan Hall epitomises the saying "never judge a book by its cover". At first glance, the tall and lanky Arlington, Virginia native seems to fit in more in a law firm or teaching physics at a university than on a jiu jitsu mat, but years of dedication to training have helped shape him into one of the most creative and well-known grapplers to hail from the USA. Countless gold medals, four professional MMA wins (all ending with a finish), numerous instructional DVD series, a viral YouTube self-defense video and a highly influential open letter in the wake of a scandal that rocked the jiu jitsu world all attest to the fact that Hall is a true martial artist and the wrong guy to pick a fight with!

Though undeniably gifted, Ryan's path to the black belt began like everyone else's; completely clueless and hopeless when first encountering grappling. He began studying martial arts under Christian Montes at Ronin Athletics in New York City. Hall describes Montes as "a friend and a mentor to this day and a person whom I am very glad to have begun my journey with." Under his tutelage Hall began learning Muay Thai, wrestling, and jiu jitsu, but he gravitated most towards the striking art because it seemed, with what he knew then, like the best way to be an effective fighter.

"I began martial arts with the intention of learning to be an effective unarmed combatant regardless of the venue, but like most people, I was pretty sure that if I could learn to be deadly enough with my hands and feet, I would be in good shape," says Hall. "While I still believe that to be true to a certain extent, there is absolutely zero doubt that once someone encounters the grappling arts on a real level for the first time, their understanding of what fighting is and how it works changes forever."

After being manhandled by smaller and less athletic training partners for a few weeks, in addition to ending up a little banged up from striking sparring, Ryan decided to give jiu jitsu more of a shot. His life was never the same. "Calculus class ended up being less about math notes and more about technique flow charts and diagrams of positions," says Hall, which he notes, "Didn't really bode too well for my continued existence in an engineering program."

Fast forward six months, and Hall was out of school, back home in Arlington, broke, but training full-time and washing mats at Jeff Ruth's NOVA MMA academy to help pay for tournament fees and gym dues. Competing in advanced/expert level nogi tournaments as a white belt in search of experience, Ryan evolved quickly. He took a number of losses early on while learning on the job as a member of Team Lloyd Irvin, but soon became a well-known competitor on the professional submission grappling circuit, wrestling well over 100 matches per year. Hall regularly defeated opponents with decades more experience, while developing a reputation for the possession of a nasty triangle that produced more than 200 finishes in tournament action.

Receiving his purple belt after two years of training, Hall began to rack up a large number of tournament titles in a small amount of time,

WORDS: FELIX RODRIGUEZ PICTURES: ALBERTO MARCHETTI

MR. 50/50

being particularly dominant on the Grappler's Quest circuit and as a purple and brown belt in the IBJJF's most prestigious events. Often facing-off against elite black belt competition like Rubens "Cobrinha" Charles, Lucas Lepri, and Baret Yoshida, with only a few years of experience of his own,Hall developed a reputation for competing in exciting fashion anytime, anywhere, against anyone.

Coming off of a major injury that sidelined him for eight months and threatened his competitive career, Ryan departed Team Lloyd Irvin in 2008 in a move that shocked the jiu jitsu community. He immediately joined Brasa team under his friend, world champion Felipe Costa (who promoted Ryan to black belt on April 1, 2010), and made successful appearances three times at the pinnacle of nogi submission grappling, the Abu Dhabi Submission Wrestling World Championships. Hall notably took bronze as a brown belt in the <66kg division in 2009, after submitting all of his opponents at the USA Trials to earn his place in the main event.

The two years that followed his promotion to black belt included a mix of successes and setbacks against top-tier opposition in the gi, with narrow defeats to world champions Rafael Mendes, Augusto Mendes, and Robson Moura punctuating a sometimes frustrating period. "I felt like I didn't really have the resources training-wise to be on level footing with my competition, unfortunately, and some really frustrating things happened on the refereeing end at a couple of major events as well," Hall explains. "On the upside, though, it was a positive thing because I felt a strong push towards what I ultimately wanted to do anyway, and it got me there earlier than I would have otherwise arrived had some of those matches gone the other way."

TESTING THE MMA WATERS

When Hall was asked to take his grappling skills into the MMA arena in early 2006 he jumped at the opportunity, though in retrospect, that leap came a bit too soon. "I trained jiu jitsu day in and day out with a pro MMA fighter and college wrestler named Dave Kaplan who helped me a lot by kicking my butt more or less unmercifully," explains Hall. "But, he always reminded me that even if I ended up being a good grappler one day, I'd never be a good fighter. He was kind of like a martial arts big brother at the time, but the big brother who kicks the crap out of you while laughing about it to himself. When my coaches asked me if I wanted to fight, I think I stepped up in the interests of shutting him up as much as anything else."

Despite his enthusiasm, Ryan's initial foray into the MMA arena was something less than ideal and ended in a decision loss. Taking a break in the midst of a streak of eight jiu jitsu tournaments in three months, he faced Eddie Fyvie from Team Renzo Gracie as a professional mixed martial artist under the Reality Fighting banner in Atlantic City, NJ. With the benefit of hindsight, Ryan does not think favourably of his choice to enter the fight with only a blue belt level of jiu jitsu and little other experience, particularly now that it sits as the sole loss on an otherwise unblemished professional record.

"For reasons that I could speculate about, but won't here, my coaches thought it was a good idea for me to fight MMA at that time," says Hall. "I wasn't inclined to turn down competition of any kind, so I went along with it. I've always been willing to fight just about anyone, so the

MR. 50/50

inexperience part wasn't really a concern," he continues, "But looking back it was not particularly appropriate to go into a situation like that without the necessary experience or skills to at least try to make things work a bit better than they did. I don't think I could have double-legged an angry 12-year-old back then, which was a bit of a problem when you're planning on winning a fight on the ground."

Fyvie controlled two of the three rounds handily, winning the fight by a judge's decision. Apparently, though, that was only a fraction of a fairly crazy story. "In addition to the serious skill problems that existed, I would have hoped for a slightly different 36 hours preceding the fight itself, because the ones I had ended up being somewhat more stressful than they could have been had people been taking things a bit more seriously," says Ryan. "I'm still not entirely sure I didn't accidentally offend a deity of some kind earlier that week, because things just became comically bad.

"I don't usually tell the story because it's almost too unbelievable for real life, but the gist of it is this: three car crashes I was involved in as a passenger, one totaled vehicle (mine), drunken coaches, starving myself of any food or drink for a day and a half because I had no idea how to lose 5 pounds properly and no one thought to educate me, and finding out the rules (no up-kicks and no knees—the only striking weapons that Hall possessed at the time) both on the way to and inside of the ring. It ended up being quite the experience and my face was marked up pretty good for a couple days. I was 21- years old at the time and after the whole thing, to say that I was annoyed with my coaches would be a pretty serious understatement. On the upside, though, I did learn that getting punched in the head repeatedly didn't bother me too much, so that was a nice feather in the cap going forward, I suppose."

Hall was disappointed, to say the least, and went back to the drawing board. He noted, "I didn't do any more MMA outside of training for a while after that. Not because I didn't like it, and not because I was particularly discouraged, but because it was something that I wanted to take time to learn how to do properly before going back to it. I really don't like dabbling and prefer to either do something 100% or not at all. Before I had much of a chance to put in any extra time on that end, though, I ended up being promoted to purple belt and started doing much better in BJJ competition, so I had to focus on grappling completely in order to try do as well as I could."

THE EVOLUTION OF BRAZILIAN JIU JITSU

In the time since Ryan first began training, there have been incredible advancements in jiu jitsu technique, and he has been at the forefront of the transition from what some would call "traditional" jiu jitsu to its more modern incarnation.

"While it used to be more of an offshoot of MMA, jiu jitsu has really become its own entity, and I think that the top level athletes are significantly better than they've ever been," says Hall. "It's really fascinating to watch and even cooler to be a part of. I guess it's what one would expect of any young sport that's getting more participation and money injected into it, but the pace of the growth is still really impressive.

"I still remember when I was on Team Lloyd Irvin and we were among the first, if not the first, to start putting up technique videos, match breakdowns and the like on YouTube. It was kind of sparse back then, but you can find almost anything online now. The level of resources that a student of the art has access to now is just exponentially improved from those days. We used to have to wait on the Mundials DVD, now we can just hop on the interwebs and look up 25 of Leandro Lo's matches to see how he's evolving his game.

"In addition to the technical advancements, strategies evolve much faster than they did in the past because of the availability of match footage. It's just so much easier to figure out how to beat certain techniques or positions than it was in the past when you might have had to rely on your memory of how things happened. Now we can watch a sequence over and over until we see a pattern or a breaking point in things. Anyone coming up with an edge needs to work extra hard to stay ahead of the curve...or find a way to break the internet so no one can see their tech. Not sure which is easier!

"In the end, it's all just fantastic, and that's without even touching on the online academies that are out there like MGinAction, which are incredible resources themselves. Granted, there's still a lot of junk out there, and it has as much of a platform as the good stuff, unfortunately for the less discerning or experienced student, but I think one will gladly take the good with the bad here. The information age is fueling the growth of the martial arts in a way that I don't know if anyone would have predicated years ago."

As a true student of the art, Hall has some interesting insight as to some specific advancement within jiu jitsu:

"When it comes to the specific evolution of the art, I think in the years since 2007 there have been massive leaps in both guard and passing.

"I FIRST LEARNED THE BASIC LEG ENTANGLEMENT OF THE 50/50 HEEL HOOK FROM BRANDON VERA AT A SEMINAR IN 2005. BRANDON, A SUCCESSFUL GRAPPLER AND MMA COMPETITOR IN HIS OWN RIGHT, HAD LEARNED THE HEEL HOOK FROM LEGLOCK SPECIALIST AND ADCC CHAMPION DEAN LISTER"

> "ANY TYPE OF LEGITIMATE INNOVATION IS DIFFICULT TO COME BY AND I THINK THAT ONE OF THE MARKS OF A TRULY GROUNDBREAKING TECHNIQUE OR STRATEGY IS ITS USEFULNESS FOR BOTH THE BEGINNER AND THE MASTER"

Certain people like Leo Vieira, Terere, and some others, were always ahead of the curve movement-wise, but you can see now that jiu jitsu just looks different than it once did. It's so much more dynamic. The leg drag and associated spin-offs have been a massive evolution in passing style when compared to the way that people were doing things at say the '98/'99/'00 Mundials. Obviously some of the meat and potatoes don't change, but adding even a single real element to a series of three things opens up an incredible number of possibilities.

"Even more so than passing, though, the guard is a night and day difference from what it was. The berimbolo, inversions, the 50/50, a leglock-heavy attack…these were always around and certain particularly innovative individuals such as Roberto "Roleta" Magalhaes and Samuel Braga, among others, were using them. That said, they've come a long, long way and have changed the face of jiu jitsu as we know it - they've achieved ubiquity.

"In many ways, some of these positions are so effective that they became a problem, because some of the athletes most skilled in these positions were able to use them to borderline cheat, avoiding the other guy's ability to get into the game at all, at least from a competitive jiu jitsu perspective. When people are changing the rules because what you're doing is disproportionately effective, even if it's not perfect, you almost certainly have something there that bears further investigation.

"You look at what Rafael and Guilherme Mendes, Cobrinha, Bruno Frazatto, myself, and a few others were able to prove with that kind of movement…speaking personally, it's incredibly gratifying to see that we were able to make an enduring mark on our sport from a technique perspective that people like the Miyao brothers, Keenan Cornelius, and others continue to evolve. It's very neat to see and I'm excited to continue to be a part of the evolution of those and other positions, as well as a spectator to and beneficiary of the innovations that others make. Jiu jitsu is endless, which is part of its beauty."

POPULARISING THE 50/50 GUARD

Ryan Hall is best known for his use of the 50/50 position, which shares a name with his academy outside of Washington, DC. He is quick to mention that he dislikes the term "invent" because he believes that techniques like the 50/50 have always been in existence and use, though we may only recognise or "discover" them now. When explaining his role in popularising this style of guard play he was extremely candid. "I most certainly did not invent it. I first learned the basic leg entanglement of the 50/50 heel hook from Brandon Vera at a seminar in 2005. Brandon, a successful grappler and MMA competitor in his own right, had learned the heel hook from leglock specialist and ADCC champion, Dean Lister, though under the name of "The Cacareco" (for Alexandre Cacareco, a tough Brazilian competitor whom he had submitted with that heel hook en route to ADCC open weight gold). I can say with certainty that I did name the position and coined the phrase 50/50, though, so I guess that's something."

The 50/50 is here to stay, but it has been the subject of much debate and criticism among people who identify with the old school traditional jiu jitsu philosophy. Hall contends that the position isn't the problem, but rather the inability of certain groups to adapt to that style of play. He noted, "It is a position that has been proven as valuable and effective in literally every form of grappling and mixed martial arts competition in which it has appeared. Honestly, though I am aware of complaints about its use, I've never seen a valid one made about it from a technical perspective. It has been called neutral, impossible to get out of, luck-based, and the like, all of which are labels that I would strongly disagree with."

Hall continues, saying, "Put simply, the position has been one of the highest percentage scoring and finishing opportunities for me and many others at the top level for a number of years. Speaking personally, I can comfortably count on one hand the number of times that the position has not gone my way in training or competition since I got the hang of it and I was able to use it as an undersized purple belt to submit a much heavier and much more experienced black belt world champion in an alternate match at the 2007 ADCC. If it were truly a crap shoot of any kind, it strikes me that this would be a difficult claim to make. If anything, I would say that the legitimate complaints point out that it is used to abuse the IBJJF scoring system, which I agree is problematic, though if I had my way, I would adjust the rules from a series of angles, as the 50/50 is hardly on its own as a vehicle for play that is not in the spirit of the martial arts.

"I believe that one should recognise this as a failing of the rules that need to be tightened up rather than some sort of issue inherent with a leg positioning. If anything, the 50/50 is disturbingly effective in many regards because it allows for the possibility, without disengaging, for an inferior player to stalemate or defeat a significantly superior one who is not versed in the position because the former can force a pitched battle that the latter does not know how to escape. That cannot be said about most things, except, ironically, jiu jitsu itself when used against someone who doesn't know how to stop it. I can only imagine that the Gracie family didn't

take the "stand up and fight me like a man" taunts too seriously when they were carving through martial artists and tough guys alike who didn't understand what they were doing but were still too stubborn or shortsighted to learn how to fight on the ground.

"In the end, it's very gratifying on a personal level that the 50/50 has made such a dent in competitive martial arts. Even though most people putting it into play are not yet experts in its use, it still has value and works for them consistently, which I find very interesting. Any type of legitimate innovation is difficult to come by and I think that one of the marks of a truly groundbreaking technique or strategy is its usefulness for both the beginner and the master. We can't all throw a straight right hand like Floyd Mayweather, but most of us wouldn't want our buddy who doesn't even play pickup basketball to haul off and punch us in the face. I'd say that's a pretty strong statement about the value of the right hand, even wielded by a novice."

THE TRADITIONAL COUNTERPOINT

Rickson Gracie is one of the most vocal detractors of modern jiu jitsu positions like the 50/50. In his opinion positions like the 50/50 "Are very effective on their way to the medal [because] they can make the fighter have a better control of the position and have a better pace in the fight. Strategically they can make a much easier game to the medal, but this efficiency doesn't translate to effectiveness in real life and so on."

When discussing Rickson's views on the 50/50 Ryan unsurprisingly offered a dissenting perspective. "I have immense respect for Rickson. I think that he's a genius and that he is a truly transcendent figure in the martial arts, but I could not disagree more with him in this particular instance. I believe that we need to make a differentiation between a position and how some players utilise it under a certain rule set. I feel very strongly that Rickson is making a mistake in judgment in equating how an individual uses a thing and what the essence of that thing itself is.

"Though I could list off of the top of my head a series of highly effective and aggressive players that utilise the 50/50 position and have had sustained success there against other top level athletes, I would prefer to address what I believe to be a flawed thought process. Most arguments against this position remind me of an individual advocating for the banning of an item because that item is sometimes used to do bad things rather than recognising that the item in question has no bearing on the capacity in which its operator chooses to use it. Getting rid of things we don't like simply because we don't like them rather than legitimately attempting to understand and meaningfully address them in a fair and balanced fashion is intellectually lazy.

"I will also say that when the current black belt open weight champion, who is a fantastic no-gi grappler and an ADCC champion, has been submitted from the 50/50 during his time as an elite competitor (vs Vinny Magalhaes at the Ultimate Absolute tournament in New York City), I take it as compelling evidence.

"Unfortunately, there are only a handful of truly elite 50/50 players at this time and not all of them are particularly aggressive in their use of the position, though this should not be held against them or the 50/50. If the rules of their competition, which if they win will favourably impact their life in a significant way, encourage a conservative approach when one has the advantage and there is no referee to truly kick everyone in the behind and get things going (a common problem in jiu jitsu competition for most positions), we must alter the rules if we want to elicit different behaviour from the athletes. To my knowledge, I have never been accused of stalling in the 50/50, I personally use the position with great effect in MMA training in addition to the success I enjoyed in grappling competition, and I look forward to the 50/50 making an appearance in my fights when the time comes.

"I believe that, if anything, the 50/50 is more submission oriented than most other positions. That said, when one removes the heel hook and starts adding additional rules [like no knee "reaping"], the position does get neutered a little bit. This encourages stalling, but if anything I would say the closed guard is 10 times more prone to stalling than the 50/50 ever has been, so I would be very comfortable saying that I completely disagree with Rickson's stance on this particular issue. Regardless, if we ever cross paths and he is willing to show me the error of my ways, I am always open to changing my views when new information presents itself and I would be truly honoured to have the opportunity to learn from one of my martial arts heroes."

TRANSITIONING BACK TO MMA

Hall's end goal had always been Mixed Martial Arts, but he misses the thrill of competing on a jiu jitsu mat. He is fully focused on MMA, but says he would consider competitive jiu jitsu again under the right circumstances. "If the right opportunity arises," Hall explains, "I would love to compete in jiu jitsu again. I was invited to ADCC 2013, but wasn't able to attend due to MMA obligations, and I was slated to compete at Metamoris before separating my shoulder during training for it, so it's been a little bit of bad luck grappling competition-wise. I would have really loved to enter both of those and show that I'm still a top-level BJJ competitor and, if anything, a good bit better than I was. Regardless of whether or not I can compete though, I still pay a fair amount of attention to the big events and watch matches from the top guys whenever I can. I've always been as much of a fan of jiu jitsu as a competitor, and that will never change. There are so many great athletes out there to learn from and it would be fantastic to compete with a couple as well, fights allowing."

Hall added, "In 2011 and 2012, I was having some pretty frustrating results at jiu jitsu competitions. Some opportunities I feel I narrowly let slip, and a couple others I ended up being blatantly cheated out of, which was immensely disappointing. In the end, I think it ended up being a positive thing, though, because it gave me a really strong push in the direction I needed to go anyway and it came at a time when I was still young enough to really make a run at things and have a chance to get to a truly high level in MMA."

Hall made the transition to full-time MMA at age

27, walking in with a 0-1 professional record, but a BJJ pedigree and competitive experience that few could match. Things started off on the right foot and Ryan TKO'd his first opponent, a 9-fight veteran, in under two minutes before finishing World Series of Fighting veteran Maged Hammo (5-2) via rear naked choke in similar time. Two more victories have followed, one via knockout and one submission.

Hall has had his frustrations, too, having found it difficult to be matched-up in fights. "Lots of guys back out, some at the last second," he says. "It's definitely frustrating. At least with a jiu jitsu tournament, when they say it's going to be on June 5th, it'll be on June 5th come rain or shine. In MMA, every fight date and opponent confirmation should be followed with 'inshallah' for full disclosure."

The move away from jiu jitsu, though he knows it to be the right one, was bittersweet itself. "On the one hand, I feel so happy and fortunate to have had the opportunity to chase my dream that has been there since the start and I could not believe more that it's the right decision, but it did mean the death on some level of another goal that I had been working towards and meant so much to me. I'm giving up my best years of competitive jiu jitsu to do this, which is frustrating at times when I think about it because I look back and consider what could've been had I continued down that path. To not have a real opportunity to get out there and see what I could do is disappointing, but I realise in life that trying to have a cake and eat it too, doesn't tend to work out well in either direction. Sacrifice is a part of being great at anything and I won't stop this thing until I'm that."

Fully committed to MMA, Hall sees the "value in seeking out experts for each discipline" and now trains under Firas Zahabi at TriStar Gym, in Montreal, Canada and in South Carolina with Ray and Stephen "Wonderboy" Thompson at Upstate Karate, in addition to the numerous athletes and coaches he brings to Fifty/50 to work with him in Falls Church, VA. He has even had the good fortune of being mentored by Kenny Florian, three-time UFC title challenger and one of the most successful jiu jitsu to MMA crossovers to date. The results have been stellar for Hall to this point, who has yet to be seriously challenged in the cage, though that will certainly change as he continues to climb the MMA ranks.

THE RYAN HALL LEGACY

A student of the martial arts first and foremost, Ryan wants nothing more than to see his training and competition philosophies tested in as complete and real a way as possible and he is willing to put his health and reputation on the line to do it. Jiu jitsu was the first step, MMA the second. Though he is quick to mention his own mistakes and setbacks, Hall feels that belief and a willingness to stand behind his convictions both on the mat and in general are his strongest assets. "It's always been a winding road for me," he says, "and I'm excited to have the opportunity to push further in MMA than I ever went in jiu jitsu. I have a fantastic group of support and I work hard every day to justify their faith in me."

In the world of Brazilian jiu jitsu, Ryan Hall will forever be known as one of the individuals most directly responsible for popularising the 50/50 position and for the butterfly effect that it and its associated innovations have had on BJJ's evolution on the mat and in the ring. Regardless of where one stands in the debate about the "purity" of these positions, no one can dispute that they have irrevocably altered the way the game is played and ushered in a new brand of jiu jitsu.

As an athlete, Ryan is proud to fly the jiu jitsu flag and to be a part of returning to prominence in MMA, the martial art that gave him the opportunity to travel the world and learn more about himself than he could have ever imagined. How far he goes in his quest for fistic glory remains to be seen, but the legacy of his grappling career, the 50/50, is here to stay.

"I WOULD LOVE TO COMPETE IN JIU JITSU AGAIN. I WAS INVITED TO ADCC 2013, BUT WASN'T ABLE TO ATTEND DUE TO MMA OBLIGATIONS, AND I WAS SLATED TO COMPETE AT METAMORIS BEFORE SEPARATING MY SHOULDER"

MR. 50/50

FELIPE PENA

ON TOP OF THE WORLD

WITH A MINUTE LEFT ON THE CLOCK, ANDRE GALVAO SECURED A TAKEDOWN THAT PUT HIM AHEAD BY AN ADVANTAGE. SIX YEARS HAD PASSED SINCE HE CLAIMED HIS LAST IBJJF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP AND IF HE COULD DEFEND FOR 60 MORE SECONDS HE WOULD BE GUARANTEED ANOTHER. UNDER THE SAME CALIFORNIA SUN, HAVING JUST TAKEN TOP POSITION, IT LOOKED LIKELY THAT ONE OF THE MOST FORMIDABLE NAMES IN THE MODERN SPORT WOULD PREVAIL AGAIN, AND MOST WERE PROBABLY EXPECTING HIM TO.

But, Galvao's position was still under threat. He had met this opponent before, winning by two points at the Pan-American Championships earlier in the year, and he probably knew that was too small a margin to be comfortable with if they were to meet again. This time in Long Beach, the endless energy of his adversary was a sight to behold as he dove under the former champion looking for something, anything to get the match on his terms.

Like a hungry Tasmanian devil the challenger pursued the limbs of his fellow finalist and an attempted toehold granted him an advantage to put him back on terms. The sweep came just as the clock hit thirty seconds and when the Atos head coach recognised he had fallen behind he launched into his attacks as his dance partner matched him all the way – like two tornadoes they spun, rolled and transitioned for the most coveted prize in Brazilian jiu jitsu.

Galvao threw himself at his challenger's legs, desperate for a takedown, but finally time was called on the bout. The hall exploded with cheers as the underdog raised his hands triumphantly. At 22 years of age, in his first year competing as a black belt, Felipe Pena had already completed the biggest goal he had ever set himself – to be a world champion.

Gracie Barra sensation Felipe "Preguica" Pena is rarely away from the mats and, forgetting to factor in the infamous punctuality of the laid back Brazilians, calling him at exactly the time we had scheduled was never going to be fruitful. "Hey man, I'm running from the gym back to my house. Give me five minutes," chimed the young world champion before adjusting: "Actually, maybe ten."

It goes without saying that a high level black belt like Pena would spend the majority of his time training, but as athletic as the boy from Belo Horizonte is, you would struggle to believe his introduction to the gentle art was forced on him by his brother due to his weight.

"My brother was a brown belt when I started to train, I started because I was very fat," he laughed. "I wanted to lose some weight, you know? My nickname is 'Preguica', which means 'sloth'. I started in Draculino's school and when I started he gave me that nickname because I didn't like to train. After a while I started to train harder and I started to like it, I just never stopped, but the name stuck.

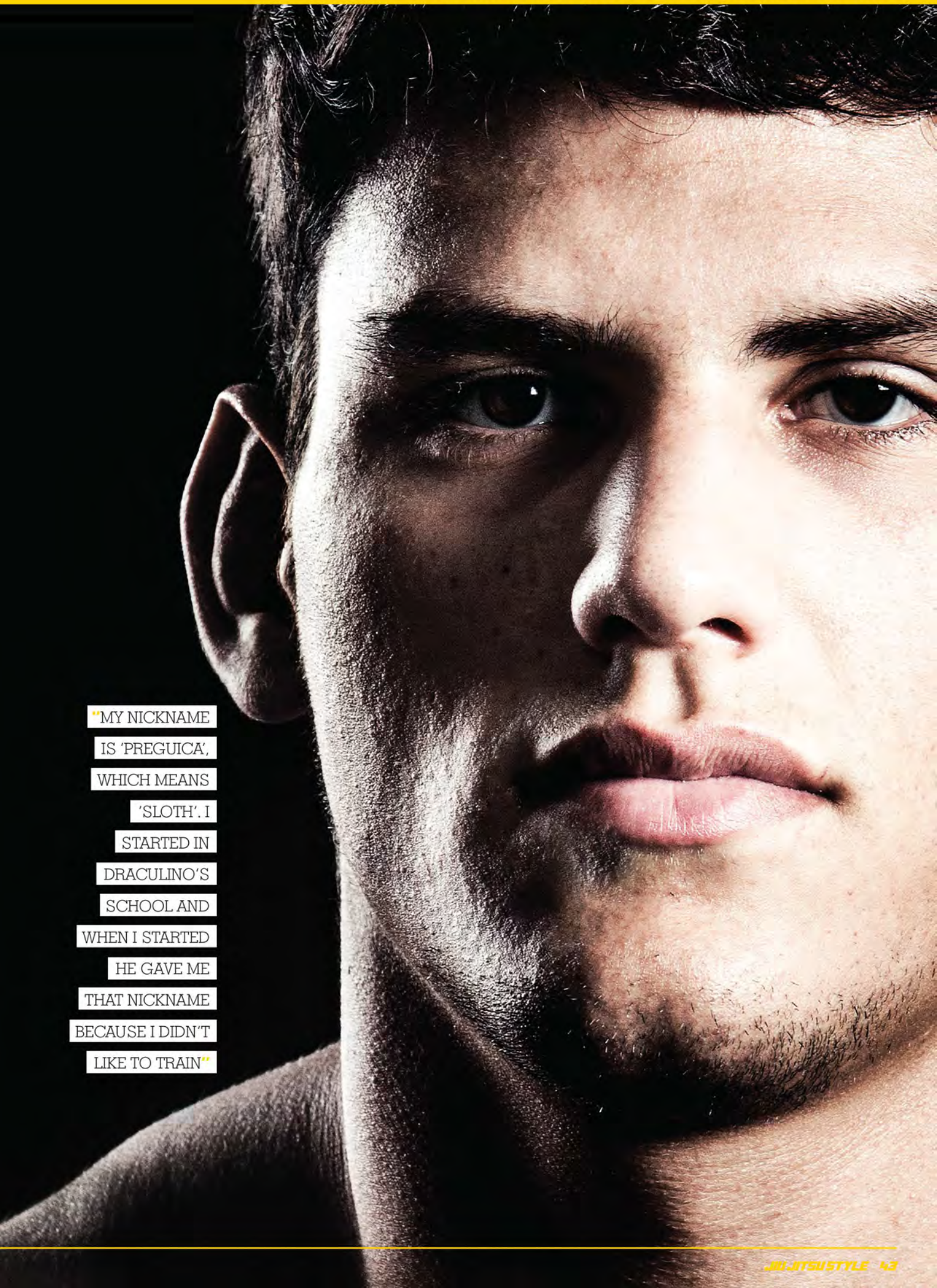
"It was a lot of things that made me stay training. My weight loss, I had a lot of friends in jiu jitsu and I really liked the training environment in the gym. It's just a really good place to be. I always saw my brother and Romulo Barral competing, they were always really healthy and really happy – I just wanted to be like them. I wanted to live that life. I decided to be a competitor and now it is my life."

Pena ran through what a normal day consists of and outlined why the notion of "the jiu jitsu lifestyle" is so important to him.

"I train for most of the day, every day. Usually it's about three times a day and that includes physical training as well. I wake up and do my physical training at 10am, then I do my first BJJ session at 12am and then I train one more session in the evening. That's pretty much my routine.

"With food, I try to eat healthy all of the time. I have no real restrictions, it's not so strict that I have to eat the same thing every day. I just focus on trying to eat good foods because that makes my body feel good. I just stay away from bad food. I use some different supplements like protein too.

"The lifestyle means a lot to me, I try to completely live the jiu jitsu lifestyle. If I had nothing all day apart from jiu jitsu I would be happy. Training, teaching, talking about jiu jitsu, making friends, eating healthy food, travelling to train and compete all around the world, teaching seminars and meeting people from different places – all of these things make up the jiu jitsu lifestyle for me," he explained.



"MY NICKNAME IS 'PREGUICA', WHICH MEANS 'SLOTH'. I STARTED IN DRACULINO'S SCHOOL AND WHEN I STARTED HE GAVE ME THAT NICKNAME BECAUSE I DIDN'T LIKE TO TRAIN"

FELIPE PENA

The active open guard style of Pena's has been widely praised by the international jiu jitsu community. As a heavyweight, the Brazilian's style tends to stand out even more against some of the bigger pressure passers in the division. Although it would seem Pena has made a conscious effort to perform in such a manner, he insists that his style is something that came about very naturally.

"I think my style comes from the way I train. Since I'm a blue belt I've liked this kind of game. I've never enjoyed that closed guard game. I know it's efficient, I know that there are a lot of attacks from there - I know I can win a lot of matches like that.

"I'm not saying that controlling from the closed guard and attacking from the closed guard isn't beautiful jiu jitsu – everything in jiu jitsu is beautiful. It's all about preference and I just enjoy playing a game with a lot of movement – toreando passes, de la Riva, open guard – they are the types of things I like.

"When I'm training for a tournament I enjoy those techniques. I think it looks nice, it's good for my game and I know it works in competition. It just came naturally," said Pena.

Pena commented on the importance of creativity in the sport and how the rules of the sport must also change as jiu jitsu evolves.

He said: "Creativity is good for jiu jitsu, the more exciting the fights are, the more people will want to get involved with the sport. It's better for the public. In saying that, I think everyone should compete in ways that they think are efficient. Obviously, stalling isn't good for the sport – it's not good for the audience.

"Jiu jitsu is great the way it is. People are constantly creating new moves and that's very important. The more creation, the more people will want to see it. It's an evolution and the rules need to follow the evolution. If they can make more rules to stop stalling, I think it's good for the sport."

There is no denying the recent expansion of jiu jitsu given that just a handful of years ago the majority of BJJ athletes found it very difficult to make a living off the sport. There is a long list of Brazilian practitioners that have left the country to capitalise on the popularity of the sport in North American, Europe and beyond, and Pena will not rule out a similar move in the future. However, although he might not be in an ideal financial situation, Pena believes he has everything he needs at his disposal in Belo Horizonte where he moves between his own gym and Gracie Barra.

"If you look at the last few years jiu jitsu has grown a lot. Even from when my brother and Romulo Barral got their black belts, they're always talking about how jiu jitsu has gotten so much bigger. The sponsors are paying so much more, a lot of tournaments are paying cash prizes and the athletes can now live off the sport. Not all of the athletes can do that but I think very soon all of the athletes will be able to live off training and competition. It's still a very young sport, it's still evolving so the future of jiu jitsu is very exciting.

"Sometimes I think about moving to the US or somewhere to open a big gym so I could make more money. Of course I want to make more money but my biggest focus isn't money at the moment. For the next four years I just want to completely focus on competing and competing really well.

"I have a gym here in my city. That really helps a lot and I've got a lot of great students. I'm not making the perfect amount of money that I want for my whole life, but I'm very happy with the situation. My gym pays all my bills and my travels with the help of some sponsors so I'm happy with that now, but I think in the future I will open a gym in the US," he revealed.

Having claimed the Copa Podio Grand Prix title on November 22 in Rio de Janeiro after an unbelievable showcase of 50/50 guard in the final with Checkmat's Luiz Panza, Pena's thirst for gold seems unquenchable. Given the number of eyes that Copa Podio and Metamoris are

"JIU JITSU IS GREAT THE WAY IT IS. PEOPLE ARE CONSTANTLY CREATING NEW MOVES AND THAT'S VERY IMPORTANT. THE MORE CREATION, THE MORE PEOPLE WILL WANT TO SEE IT. IT'S AN EVOLUTION AND THE RULES NEED TO FOLLOW THE EVOLUTION"

"I ALREADY GOT AN INVITE TO FIGHT IN METAMORIS BUT I COULDN'T ACCEPT IT BECAUSE OF MY CONTRACT WITH COPA PODIO"

attracting, the black belt champion believes they are essential for the advancement of the game which has seen so much of its talent crossover to MMA in the past.

"I already got an invite to fight in Metamoris but I couldn't accept it because of my contract with Copa Podio," said Pena. "For now, I can't fight in similar tournaments like Metamoris, Grand Prix and other super fights. It is shows like these that prove that the sport is growing. Just a few years ago we didn't have these types of tournaments.

"It's making the sport more professional and of course, one day I would love to compete in Metamoris. It's a really nice event. They allow people to get to know the athletes, the athletes are paid and it's kind of got the same vibe as UFC. The more competitions outside of the federation that can pay the athletes the better, it really helps everyone involved in the sport.

"In the past you had to go to MMA to make a career out of the sport. Jiu jitsu players that wanted money had no other choices. These new events definitely help, but there is still no security in jiu jitsu as a career. Still, there is a lot of money available now in BJJ, so there isn't the same push to go to MMA in my opinion."

The Copa Podio Grand Prix winner discussed some of the most important people in his life that have helped him reach the top of sport, citing Vinicius "Draculino" Magalhaes's successful building of a BJJ community in Belo Horizonte as one of the most important factors in his ascent.

"Although he moved to the US when I got my blue belt, Draculino has been really good to me, I trained in his school since the beginning. He comes back once a year for the belt promotions but I couldn't really take a lot of classes from him. If he didn't do all the work that he has done in Belo Horizonte, making it such a good location for BJJ with really good partners to train with, I wouldn't have been able to do this.

"My brother as well, Augusto 'Tio Chico', he introduced me to jiu jitsu. He gave me my start and he still trains with me a lot to this day. Then there's Romulo Barral as well, he has always been there too and I go to his gym in the US to train when I'm over there. I spent six months with him when I was a brown belt. He has helped me a lot and he has shown me the way to accomplish my goals.

"Then there are my teachers who took over after Draculino left: Marcelo "Uirapuru" Azevedo and Sergio Benini – they were my main teachers. They've have shown me the way since I was a blue belt. There are so many other people that are not involved in BJJ that have helped me too. My family have always supported me, they are so helpful and they have always told me to follow my dream."

Although he remembers his June world championship win as a dream realised, Pena revealed that he has little memory of the actual contest, or in fact any contest he has taken part in.

"It was big dream come true. I know I'm really young, and that was my first year as a black belt. It was incredible even though I knew that I could

do it. I had fought Galvao one time before in the Pan-Ams and it was a very tough match, he won by two points. By the time the Worlds came around I had already competed with a lot of the top guys so I felt ready.

"The thing is I never really remember much about my fights. Sometimes my friends ask me, 'hey man, what's that thing that you do', but I just never remember anything from it really. I think I just get so excited during the match that I can't think properly about it afterwards. All I know is that it happened. I only remember when I watch it back. I remember I saw that I was losing, I looked at the clock and then I just gave it my maximum effort," he recalled.

With so much success so early on in his career, Pena broke down his goals for the future, with the absolute world championship taking priority at the top of the list:

"I accomplished my biggest goal, but I still have so many I want to accomplish. I want to be the ADCC champion and my biggest dream is to be the absolute world champion. I just want to fight the best guys. I think I will be competing for at least the next ten years so I have a lot of things to do in that time."

Finally, the 23 year old shed some light on what he does when he is away from the mats. "I have a girlfriend, when I'm not training or teaching I'm usually with her," he said. "I like watching movies and I like Japanese food. I bought a PlayStation about three months ago and I've only played it two times, but maybe that's a good thing. I just like normal things. When I've got time at the weekend I go out with my friends, just normal things."

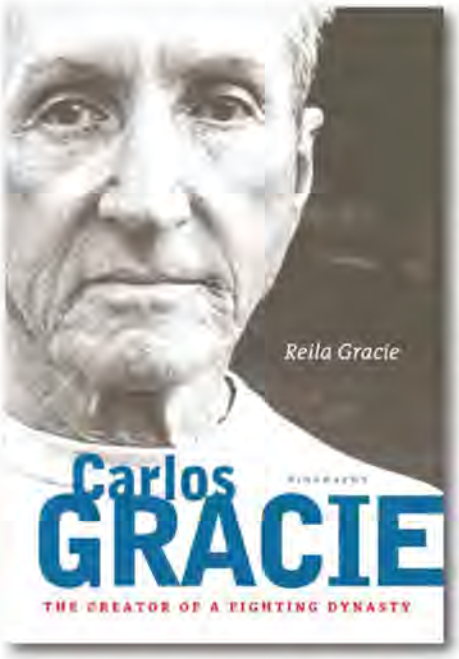
IBJJF black belt champion, Copa Podio Grand Prix champion, pretty much fluent in English and an owner of his own gym – all at 23 years of age – I found myself compelled to find a weakness in one of the golden boys of BJJ. Simply, I just asked him to list some things he found difficult.

"I am bad at a lot of things, man," he laughed.

I don't think I believe him.

BUDO JAKE | TALKS WITH REILA GRACIE

IN THIS DIGITAL AGE, WITH SO MUCH INFORMATION ONLINE, IT'S NICE TO SEE A MASSIVE 500+ PAGE BOOK COME OUT. REILA GRACIE, MOTHER OF ROGER GRACIE, HAS RELEASED AN EPIC BIOGRAPHY ON HER FATHER TITLED *"CARLOS GRACIE: CREATOR OF A FIGHTING DYNASTY"*. PORTUGUESE LANGUAGE READERS MIGHT ALREADY BE FAMILIAR WITH THE BOOK AS IT WAS RELEASED IN BRAZIL A FEW YEARS AGO AND IS NOW SOLD OUT.



This huge undertaking took Reila more than 10 years to research and put together. There are many previously unpublished fascinating photos of Carlos, his siblings, and many of their children as well.

In America, we have received a number of biographies of the early Gracies through documentary films such as "*Gracies and the Birth of Vale Tudo*" and Kid Peligro's book "*The Gracie Way*". As with any art form, the information in the stories on the Gracies is always presented in a way that favours one side of the family over another.

I think all families are complicated and I can't even imagine how it must be having a family as large as the Gracies. Note that Carlos Gracie had an astounding twenty one children! Needless to say, the Gracie family had an incredible impact on martial arts in America and the world. We're fortunate to be able to hear more about some of the early stories surrounding the family.

I applaud Reila for not sanitising the stories. Carlos is not made out to be a saint. The early 1900's were a different time and some of his actions are not understandable from a modern 21st century reader's perspective.

As I read the book I was filled with many questions for Reila. I wanted to know about her motivations to write the book, the difficulties she encountered during the writing process, some of the surprises she uncovered, and more. She was very forthcoming with her answers so I hope you enjoy this interview as much as I did!

Why did you feel the need to write this book?

The Gracie family has an immeasurable importance in Brazilian sports culture. I am not aware of any other family in the world that has been able to maintain a professional tradition in sports or martial arts for nearly a century, reaching four generations. And the creator of this dynasty of fighters is Carlos Gracie, my father.

When the UFC revealed to the world the technical efficiency of jiu-jitsu developed by the Gracies, Carlos was said to be the guru and nutritionist of the family, thus eliminating his importance in the history of jiu-jitsu. Like him, other champions of my family were also virtually excluded: my brothers Rolls and Carlson, for example.

I could not bear this historical manipulation and saw that the only way to fix it would be doing thorough research and writing a book about the life of my father, revealing how it actually happened and the importance that each had in building this dynasty of Gracie fighters.

How long did the research take?

Interweaving the research and text work, it took ten years to write this book. All research however has no end and I believe that all biographers have this same opinion. You can always find more information, but there comes a time when the opposite happens, we actually have to remove passages and statements to avoid losing the purpose of the book and the narrative quality.

What was the hardest part of the research?

As I am a person who keeps an affective channel, the initial phase of interviews with family was the hardest. Getting to know more deeply the facts and the relationship that my brothers, uncles, cousins and nephews had with my father made me review the relationship I had with each of them in childhood, and I was very touched by the trust placed in me.

Carlos Gracie had died, but his clan is still alive and is continuing its history. Another difficulty was when my son Roger decided to take jiu-jitsu as a profession. Because of him, I returned to attend the championships and interact with the environment more acutely. While I recorded the past, this interfered in my thinking about the future.

Throughout the writing process I still had to deal with a succession of deaths: three uncles, my mother, and my siblings Rose, Carlson and Geisa. It was a very painful process, but... I survived.

Of all of the information you found out what surprised you the most?

As I had the story mapped out in my mind, the information found in the research was filling in gaps like a puzzle, but still there were some surprises. The volume of publications found in the papers of the 1930s, about my father and his brothers, was one of them. Mainly they detailed the role he, Carlos Gracie, played in the careers of his brothers and the Brazilianisation process of jiu-jitsu.

And also they revealed the role of Uncle George as a fighter. All newspaper clippings, filed for forty years at the academy of my father, the Academia Gracie, stayed with Uncle Helio, who then donated them to Rorion, my cousin. Before my book only Uncle Helio appeared.

Another surprise was to have found correspondence of my mother when she was in Peru. She had already given me the correspondence between my father, his partner Oscar, Uncle Helio and Aunt Margarida, but I could only get the information after her death. These documents helped me better understand the role of my father in the formation of the clan and how it related to life.

Did your opinion of your father change after completing your research? If so, how?

I came to admire him more, because I understood better the way the family members think and act and the greatness of their purposes and accomplishments. I never viewed my father as a myth or guru but as a man capable of trial and error.

His greatness is exactly the census of humanity, revealed by a prospective ability to think and act for the collective so comprehensive that only exceptional people possess.

Are there any questions about your father left unanswered?

I am sure that readers will find in my book a narrative on the life of Carlos Gracie much more complete than expected. All the facts reported in the book are supported by oral and written documents. But you can find some inaccurate dates, as in any reconstruction process of the past that can occur and is perfectly acceptable.

The purpose of the book is to give the dimension of the importance of Carlos Gracie in the improvement process and Brazilianisation of Japanese jiu-jitsu and the creation and development of the Gracie fighters' dynasty. This book perfectly fulfils its role and goes far beyond, because the story begins with the arrival of the first Gracie to Brazil in 1826. It also reconstructs the history of Carlos Gracie and redeems many people who, like him, had their importance minimised in the international promotion of Brazilian jiu-jitsu.

What impression of your father do you hope the readers are left with?

Surely the same as he left me. He's an example of a human being who, driven by his ideals and admirable willpower, was able to leverage the effects of his actions on behalf of the collective almost imperceptibly. And that to positively transform the lives of countless people has its own much more rich and full meaning.

I only warn the English-speaking readers to consider cultural differences when they read my book, as I narrate the story of a Brazilian, born in the Amazon in 1902, heavily influenced by the cultural diversity arising from the mixing that took place in his country, Brazil.

The English version of "Carlos Gracie: Creator of a Fighting Dynasty" is available now for customers worldwide on Budovideos.com.

BUDO JAKE AND REILA GRACIE

FAVELA
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SEBASTIAN BROSCHE'S YOGA UNIAD

EVER MET A SEMI-PROFESSIONAL JUDO PLAYER, TURNED BJJ WORLD CHAMPION, TURNED YOGA MASTER, WHO LIVES IN ISOLATION IN THE NORWEGIAN FOREST? WE HAVE.

Swedish-born Sebastian Brosche is a 30 year-old brown belt representing Frontline Academy in Norway. After years of judo training and brutal bodily attrition, Brosche found salvation in yoga, rebuilding his strength and flying full throttle into BJJ.

Now a former purple belt double gold IBJJF world champion, WPJJC brown belt champion and general badass, Brosche has merged the arts of BJJ and yoga with perfect synchronicity. His mission: to keep us fit, flexible, healthy and on the mat well into our sixties.

We caught up with Sebastian to discuss his grappling credentials and the formation of his unique website www.yogaforbjj.net.

Hey Sebastian, thanks for talking to us. Tell is a little bit about your judo training as a youngster and eventual transition into BJJ.

Well when I got to the age of 16 I was training judo at a semi-professional level. At this stage everyone was getting into the UFC, and like everyone else I had seen UFC one, two and three. After seeing Royce Gracie cleaning up in the UFC we all thought, 'hey, he's doing judo', so we didn't even know what BJJ was. We thought it was a bad copy of judo.

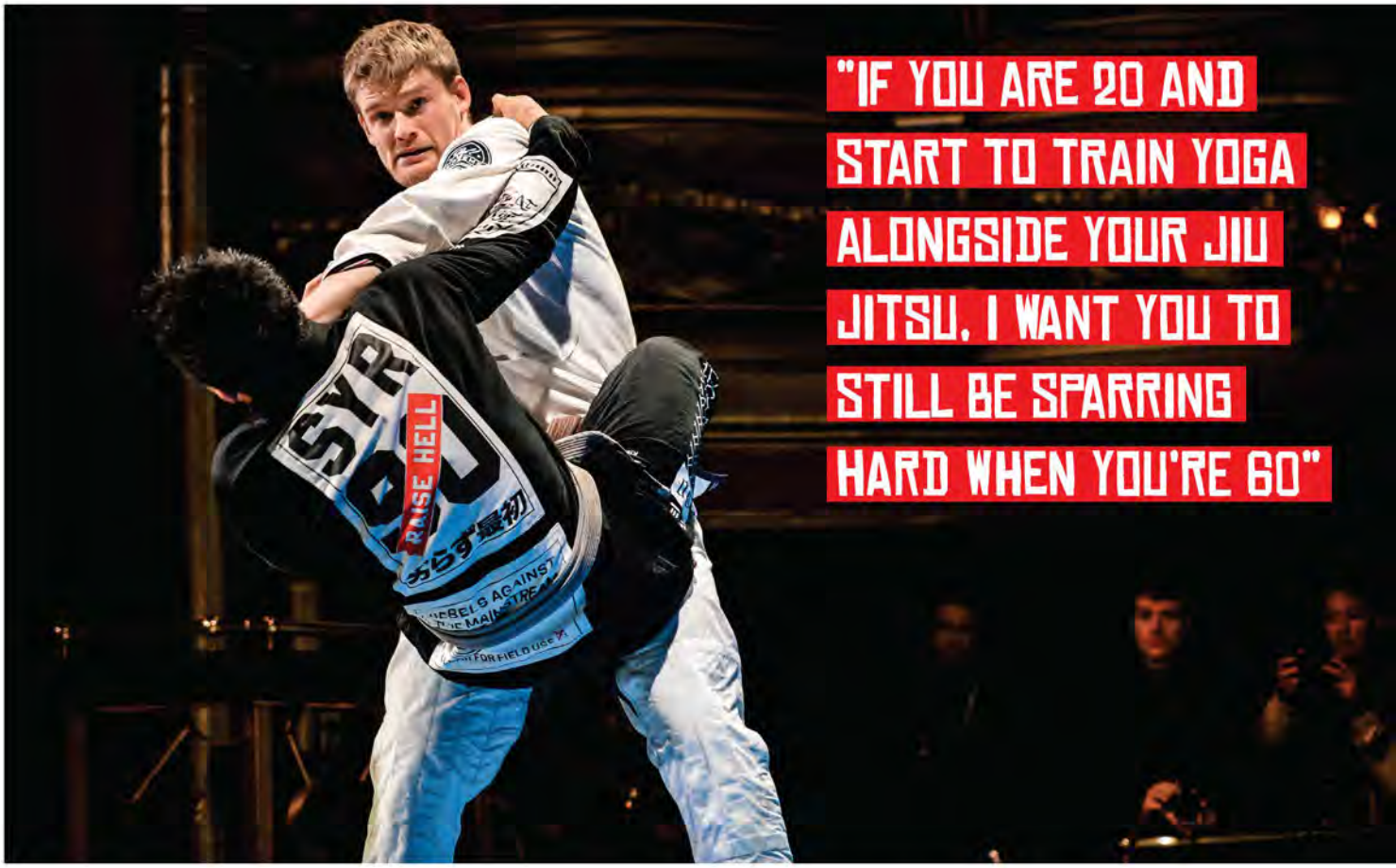
Even though I was trying to go professional in judo, I found I quickly got hooked on BJJ. When I got a really bad back injury, I realised that judo really wasn't going to cut it for me. I moved to a different gym and they had a BJJ academy, this was around the time people starting uploading ripped instructionals online. I'd download stuff like Marcelo Garcia's technique videos and I realised just how vast the technical game was in BJJ. It actually didn't take me long at all to switch into the BJJ way of thinking, as I guess I felt like I had been doing BJJ all along.

You mentioned your bad back injury, so was that a result of your judo training?

Yes. I was training too hard and not eating enough. I also didn't do enough power training to stay healthy for judo, as you need a level of strength to cope with the massive impact.

And we are correct in saying that yoga played a big part in rehabilitating your back?

Yeah, so I actually started yoga when I met my fiancée, as she is a yoga instructor. She really helped and encouraged me to do something about my back problem as it was really bugging me. It actually took me about one year of yoga training to remove the injury, so it took a while. When I looked at my general habits and mentality of thoughts, it took a little longer to make the changes. I guess I was actually injured for about six years, so it took me a long time to change my thought process from, 'I can't think like this or I shouldn't do that'.



You are now a huge advocate of the benefits of yoga, and especially the synergy between yoga and BJJ?

Absolutely. If you look at your breathing as an example: in a street fight it may last 30 seconds, so you can afford to not breathe properly. In jiu jitsu, sometimes you have to prepare for 10 minutes or more, so you need economy of energy, which starts with proper breathing. If you are preparing for a day of competition, you cannot rely on adrenalin. Yoga teaches you how to be efficient with your breathing. Flexibility is more obvious, we know yoga helps with this, but breathing is equally important.

The feedback that I get from people who use my website or who come to class is very interesting. I have MMA fighters who come for three sessions and they already feel stronger, because they learn to use their stabilising muscles to support their power training. It's really fun to see people learn to use yoga to make them stronger.

One of our observations of you as a competitor is that you rarely look tired, so that must be in part down to your yoga breathing?

Well the funny thing is that I think I never look tired in competition even if sometimes I am really tired. The more yoga I practise, the less I have to fake it, but I think it is also part of the mental game – you bluff. Look at Thai boxing, if someone gets punched in the face they always try and act like it was nothing.

So tell us a little bit about your website yogaforbjj.net and the thinking behind it?

Basically I use the website to post videos every week. All yoga is very good, but I try to be really specific and look at the most common issues people face when training BJJ. So I look at hip and shoulder mobility, spine and core strength as examples.

The website has been running for one year and it's so great to hear the impact it has had on people who use it. I had an email yesterday from a 38 year-old guy in Ireland who has trained judo his whole life and feels like he's falling to pieces. After a few months using the website people tell me their bodies feel so much better – all from sitting on the floor to breathing, stretching and relaxing. You don't need to visit an expensive guru to be able to get the benefits and appreciate the results. Of course, it all takes effort, but the results will also come really fast because your body is no doubt ready for it after years of grappling.

The goal for the website may sound like a cliché, but I don't think so. It is 'train smart to fight forever'. If you train smart, efficient and specific then you will achieve longevity. If you are 20 and start to train yoga alongside your jiu jitsu, I want you to still be sparring hard when you're 60. That's the dream, right? We all want to train BJJ as long as we can. If you need ten surgeries and countless knee replacements it's going to be hard to achieve this. It's better to do some preventative training and embrace yoga.

It's also worth noting that you are now 30 and showing no signs of slowing down! I guess there's no chance of you entering the masters division anytime soon?

I know I'm not invincible and I'm going to get older like everyone else, but I'm going to do it with style. I don't want any youngsters beating me just because they are young, they will have to beat me with technique.

‘BE THE CHANGE’ KIMONO

progressjj.co.uk

Athlete: Sean Coates
GB Nottingham
Bronze Medalist 2014 Worlds
British Champion 2014

Both you and your fiancée teach yoga for a living, but is it also true that you live in quite an isolated house out in the woods?

Yeah, we actually live in a cabin out in the middle of the forest. It's great. We can just open the doors and let our dogs walk themselves, there's snow all around and it's really beautiful. We can also walk around our porch totally naked no problem, as there's no one around. It's a bit cold for that right now though (laughs).

It's just a really nice environment when you're working in the city with all the traffic and all the people. I come home and it's peaceful, silent and beautiful. It takes me about 45 minutes to drive from my cabin in the forest into the city.

So we can expect to see you wielding an axe and growing a beard over the coming years, as a lumberjack?

Well I've actually done that before! I was a lumberjack with my dad in the summer for many years, and then I used the money to travel in the winters and stuff like that.

Great stuff! Coming back to jiu jitsu, you've quickly become one of the most decorated European fighters, so can you run us through your list of achievements?

Well, if you ask me I think it's all s**t but here it goes (laughs). I won the World Professional Jiu Jitsu Championship at brown belt, plus I've taken a couple of bronze medals at the IBJJF Worlds as a brown belt. I guess an old achievement was winning double gold at the IBJJF worlds as a purple belt, but that was about five years ago now. I think that's about it.

Any standout fights during your career?

I would say Lekinho Silva was probably the strongest guy I fought this year at the Worlds in the semi-final. I couldn't believe how quickly he managed to armbar me, but he really deserved it. I would also say my most memorable fight was the open final at the Worlds at purple. I wasn't expecting anything and I won the final by one advantage.

It was also great to see you fight in London recently at the Toukon Challenge. Did you enjoy the show?

I loved it! Since I never drink alcohol I usually don't appreciate people being drunk, but people at the event were all having a great time and having a few beers. Maybe the British pub culture isn't too bad when combined with sports.

And your performances at the event were pretty awesome too!

Actually I was pretty impressed with myself as well. Usually after a competition I get a bit disappointed in performance, but with Toukon I was really happy.

You seemed to really enjoy yourself at Toukon, so do you see yourself as a bit of a showman?

Well in my eyes I know lots of people paid money to watch Toukon and were looking forward to it, so it becomes entertainment. They were only six-minute fights, and everyone wanted to look for submissions. As people were looking for entertainment I just decided to do what I do in training and try to have as much fun as I can. It was great to hear the feedback that people enjoyed the show, and I was also happy that I won of course.

We heard a little rumour that you only train BJJ once a week – is that true?

Who told you that (laughs)? I train twice a week actually. Now because of work and things like that, twice a week is what I manage. Before I would try to squeeze in several sessions a day sometimes, but as I get older I want to accomplish more than just training BJJ. Having said that, I've found ways to make my training more efficient.

I do my own warm ups, then I also play my A-game against the strong opponents and my back-up game against the weaker opponents. I also book my rolls in early, which means I ask guys before we start if we can train. I always start from the top down, so sparring with black belts first then down to brown, then purple. As it's only two sessions per week I have to really make it count.

The Frontline Academy in Norway has a lot of students too, right?

It's the biggest academy in Norway, yes. I think we have 500 people training Thai boxing, MMA and submission grappling. I think it's one of the biggest academies in Europe and the quality we have there is really very good.

Do you still have any goals as a brown belt?

I would still love to win the Worlds since I've got to the semi-finals two years in a row and have two bronze medals. I really look forward to making a comeback next year at all the big tournaments like the Europeans, Worlds and World Pro.

Thanks for your time Sebastian, was there anything else you'd like to say to our readers?

Of course a big shout out to my sponsor, Roll Supreme. I'd also like to encourage everyone that is already a member on my website to keep training. It's always so encouraging for me to hear your stories and progress in yoga, so do keep on going.

MAXMILIANO CAMPOS THE WHITEOUT KIMONO

ULTRALIGHT COMPETITION KIMONO NOW AVAILABLE EXCLUSIVELY AT MARTIALARTSSUPPLIES.COM AND ROLLMORE.COM

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MACHADO TALKS

THE HAMMER AND THE NAIL

The daily run outs on the mat can, at times, prove quite challenging. As a pupil grows in stature, his/her skill set will lead to longer rounds, and ultimately more difficulties, as their training partners also reach higher levels.

It is often the case when encountering barriers toward excellence that students will cross paths and face new challenges. That scenario will eventually offer a glimpse of how life works, within the limits of the jiu jitsu mat. A student cannot expect the same outcome every time he or she comes to train, as the common expression implies: "Sometimes you will be the hammer, sometimes the nail".

The story that unfolds is a reflection of what happens in real life. When situations create opportunities, challenges will present themselves before growth may occur. It is important to keep the focus when those ups and downs play their course, so that students who are the hammer do not lose sight of their journey: one day they will become the nail. This interaction is certain to happen, and what ultimately matters is not on which side we end up, but on how we handle ourselves and manoeuvre our way as we transition from one side to the other.

A prodigious student may become complacent as he or she experiences the initial status of "one of the academy's best". Complacency may reinforce the fallacy that superior skill level at a certain point in time will ensure that no more challenges will affect their position as "The Hammer". Such behaviour is detrimental to the student's progression and skill level. As is often the case, beside the techniques on the mat, a student must gain maturity and insight on the strategy and attitude necessary to keep his or her focus as their training evolves.

"TOP STUDENTS WILL ALWAYS PROSPER AT A MUCH GREATER RATE WHEN THEIR UPBRINGING IN THE SCHOOL MOTIVATES THEM TO EQUALLY TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE "HAMMER" AND "NAIL" SITUATIONS"

A great student will produce opportunities for other students to grow, since their example and technical potential will become a healthy target for others to achieve. And if that student is to remain great, they will need well-equipped training partners, who will aid them towards further untapped potential.

The only issue that may prevent such a process will be the student's inability to cope when others step up to the plate and offer much greater opposition to their game, eventually forcing the "Hammer" student to experience how it feels to be "The Nail". A dangerous sign can be detected when a better student starts to avoid practising with partners who offer them a "good run for their money". It is tempting to train with those who will keep us from slipping out of our safe zone.

If all we care about is to out-perform our classmates, then we miss opportunities of finding more ways to grow beyond where we have been. That is a disturbing trend that may foster the existence of "cliques" (a group within a group of students, who opt to stay within that group, in order to preserve whatever hierarchy or position that they see fit).

Left unchecked, this trend can become one of the most powerful ways to undermine a school structure, as it segregates top students into different circles, where each party only interacts with those from the circle they belong to, at the expense of the entire group as a whole. A situation like that requires direct and swift intervention by the instructor, to ensure that no egos become too big. The disintegration of the larger group is curbed by eliminating these "cliques".

Top students will always prosper at a much greater rate when their upbringing in the school motivates them to equally take advantage of the "Hammer" and "Nail" situations.

I enjoy teaching the students who have better moves to share, or have "ace" tricks, but at the same time try to teach the others how to counter those moves. If a move is to remain effective, it has to be continuously challenged and upgraded. That is the nature of jiu jitsu: there cannot be any rock unmoved or any secret not revealed.

Those who endeavour to keep their "secrets" so that they can maintain their supremacy on the mat will soon realise their skills do not grow, but fade away as time passes by. The blade has to be constantly sharpened otherwise it will become dull, which in jiu jitsu terms means stagnation. It is in our best interest to face the days when we are "Hammers" in the same way we do with those days when we are "The Nail". We measure progress not during the times we tap or get tapped out, but on how we manage to keep on tapping others out, or avoiding getting caught repeatedly in the same way. Remember, the mat will never quit from trying to test you, whether you are the hammer or the nail. In the meantime, stay healthy and keep on training.

CARLOS MACHADO

9th Degree Coral Belt
Owner RCJ Machado Jiu-Jitsu Inc.

IMPORT/EXPORT

SOME QUESTIONS INHERENTLY INTRIGUE: DESPITE THE MULTIPLICITY OF PIGEONS IN LONDON'S LEICESTER SQUARE, WHY CAN YOU NOT SPOT A BABY ONE? WHAT WOULD YOU BE ABLE TO SEE IF, WHILST IN A LITTLE TIN SPACECRAFT, YOU FLEW OUT OF THE SIDE OF THE UNIVERSE? AND, FOR BJJ'ERS, WHAT ON EARTH WOULD IT BE LIKE TO COMPETE IN A BRAZILIAN JIU JITSU COMPETITION IN JAPAN, THE BIRTHPLACE OF TRADITIONAL JIU JITSU?

This last question has fascinated me, as a long time student of the traditional Japanese martial arts and now a fully committed BJJ 'hack', for some time. Needless to say then, spotting the banner for the 'Asian Open' whilst perusing the IBJJF website piqued my interest.

To be held in Nagoya, Japan, this was the opportunity I craved.

At this point, a rudimentary and very brief (as most of you will already know this information) history of the development of BJJ is necessary to introduce, explain and justify my obsession with this trip!

1532 AD in Feudal Japan- earliest record of the term Jiu Jitsu - give or take a few years due to guys, or gals, forgetting to write this stuff down. Let's just agree though that it started in Japan, ages ago!

Around 1907/08 the first Japanese immigrants started to arrive in Brazil - for various reasons including peddling their own wares as well as the search for difference in others'.

1914 - Mitsuyo Maeda - A martial arts champ - jumps on the band wagon and also makes a home in Brazil.

1916 - at 10.32am, Maeda meets members of the Gracie family (I made the time up - I wondered if you guessed?). Lessons ensue.

1925 – the first Gracie school is founded.

1993 - the UFC happens! Possibly for the first time people see BJJ on the TV. Martial artists watch the VHS, rewind, watch and practise ad infinitum.

Around 2000, BJJ is formally 'globalised' and arrives back home in Japan (as well as a billion other places).

Ok, that's it for timelines. It won't get me a degree in history, but you get the picture- Japan exported jiu jitsu, Brazil happily imported and 'Brazilified' it, Brazil re-exported and now it's time to see if Japan has, just as happily, re-imported it!

With my flights booked, it was time for me to travel and see if the Japanese really did welcome back an art that they had once taught and promoted; an art that was being 'sold' back to them? These questions naturally arise:

Knowing how fiercely proud they are of their culture, arts (martial and otherwise) and language, how would the Japanese welcome the 'lifestyle' that so epitomises BJJ? As the world's great 'refiners' of existing models and systems, how would they take to having their very own ne waza (ground fighting) techniques improved upon? Would they embrace or resist the adaptations? In the past, certainly within judo circles, evidence has been that adaptations of their arts were very much resisted. When the Russians won a series of sambo vs judo matches in the 1960's, the authorities complained bitterly, made excuses and even looked to adjust judo rules so that this could not happen again.

Amidst a culture where many embrace minimalism – the simple contrast of black and white zen calligraphy, the crisp white of a karate uniform, the short but powerful messages of *Haiku* poetry - how would the Japanese be with the superfluous nature of BJJ kimono patches, hugging, sprawling around the mat after training, and noisy crowds?

I was aware, of course, that these questions I so needed to answer could be born from no more than my own caricatures. However, a chance meeting with Ken during my flight, a purple belt from Aberdeen, proved that I was not alone. He had the very same questions for the trip.

DAY ONE - ARRIVAL

After landing in Tokyo, I sped south on the impressive Shinkansen (bullet train) to Nagoya. Although not competing until mid-afternoon the following day, I nevertheless decided to stop by the competition venue on the way to the hotel to get a 'feel' for the environment (that, and the fact that I am a little OCD about getting lost and being late on fight day).

Held at the Aichi Ken Budokan (martial arts hall of Aichi Prefecture/County), it was, pre-tournament, just what I expected from a traditional Japanese Budokan (based on previous visits as a karate student): quiet, save for some distant kiaai's (fight shouts) from behind closed doors you couldn't see, leading to halls you equally couldn't see, impeccably clean and refreshingly polite.

Welcoming staff assured me that I was in the correct place for tomorrow's tournament:

"A day early", they informed, politely.
"I know, thank you".
"A day early", a little more politely insistent.
"Yes, hai, I know, thank you".
"Sir, a day…"
On it went for some time.

DAY TWO - TIME TO FIGHT

The long flight (twelve hours) and time difference (nine hours ahead) kicked in and I woke dizzily tired. Not what you want to feel on the morning of your comp! That morning, I would attempt to get a sense of the locals' awareness of Brazilian jiu jitsu and I started at the front desk of my hotel.

They had no clue!

They knew of karate, judo, Japanese jiu jitsu, but looked at me blankly when I asked them of their knowledge of BJJ. As proud as I am of my 'A*' in GCSE Japanese language, attained from the academic force that is 'Richmond Adult Community College', I am humbly mindful that any seven year old Japanese native would, albeit politely, snigger at the vocabulary levels needed to pass. It is highly likely that this was the problem with their comprehension of BJJ. I had to settle on Newaza, as means of explanation and this was not a great start in confirming how popular BJJ is to the Japanese.

Next to be unofficially interviewed was Dan, a professional jazz musician, American born, living in Japan for over fifteen years with his Japanese wife. I met him on the train. Dan was very aware of the Brazil/Japan connection. In fact he taught me quite a lot about the strength and depth of the immigration policies between the two countries. This was looking promising.

Conversation turned (or was rather manhandled as I had to get off in three stops) toward BJJ.

"Not so sure about BJJ man. I play trombone, I don't fight," he chuckled. "You gonna punch this guy in the match dude?"

I gave up on the impromptu interviews. I would soon see and be able to answer the questions for myself.

The sign at the entrance to the Budokan has beautifully crafted calligraphy adorning it. Zen calligraphy (Shodo) never fails to nurture me into a state of calm as I imagine it was created in an environment of tranquility- as it was when I dropped by here yesterday for a sneak preview.

Boom! I was shaken out of my peaceful state.

Noise rushed at me as I opened the double entrance doors. The familiar screams of 'Bora Bora", cheers, loud calls over a microphone that you had to strain to hear through the distortion, children rushing in, children rushing out, rushing pretty much everywhere.

A question was answered. This was not a silent place any longer. This place did not host a quiet, knowledgeable and appreciative Japanese crowd so often spoken of by non-Japanese 'Pride' fighters back in the day (many of them were reportedly 'freaked out' by the silence, mistaking the Japanese display

of quiet manners as disinterest in the fighter and the fight).

I was surprised until I mingled with the crowd. It was mostly Portuguese language and Brazilian faces I could see and hear. I would guestimate that 85% of the arena was filled with non-Japanese (later I would learn that the city of Nagoya was home to the largest Brazilian community in Japan).

Now don't get me wrong, I am a big fan of the 'Brazilian soundtrack' that so energises BJJ academies globally; I just wasn't expecting it here! Historically, I knew of the movement of Japanese to Brazil but was unaware, until now, of how that movement of people had been reciprocated.

I wandered down to mingle with the competitors before I would change for my own matches.

I spotted just two plain, old-school, non-patched gis, and it was two guys from Australia wearing these. Everywhere else, a rich assortment of crazy BJJ gis and patches were worn by all: Japanese, Americans, Chinese, Mongolians; pretty much every one. (I even ended up buying the coolest and most outrageous one of my own from a Japanese brand, which I am still trying to justify to my wife!).

Next for my 'examination' were the techniques of the fighters. I decided to test this on a match that just had Japanese competitors fighting it. Would I see a hybrid of BJJ? Would it be a BJJ/judo blend; a mostly traditional arts base with a mere 'nod' to the techniques of BJJ?

No. No way whatsoever!

In the Japanese vs Japanese matches that I sat and watched, I saw on display the most stunning, creative, modern and forward thinking BJJ I have yet to see anywhere. Flowing, inventive and unhindered by the staunch rigidity of some of the traditional arts, it was a joy to watch.

My final questions were answered whilst fighting in my own category - Masters 3, 'old enough to know better' division. In the final I faced a Japanese competitor. It was a pleasure: tough, spirited and an honour to be involved in. Complete with reciprocal respect and manners but with an in-fight ferocity that reminded me of past karate competitions here.

After, we bowed and warmly embraced in true BJJ style.

"Judoka?" I asked, assuming that after the ashi barai (foot sweep) he floored me with that he must have been a judo player.

"Iie, BJJ ka desu" – "No, BJJ player" he answered!

So from what I could see, Japan had more than welcomed jiu jitsu in its morphed form of BJJ, warts and all! But for all the 'sameness', there is still something very special about competing in Japan against the Japanese.

No matter how much they adopt another's way, their own magnificent culture is so deeply embedded that hues of it shade the background to all that they replicate. Evolutions born out of Japan have a subtle stamp, a watermark, embodied with their uniqueness. Touches of the 'Samurai spirit' echo forward from the past, and although not blatant, obvious enough for you to understand that, even if today you won, on any other day that Japanese spirit will 'conquer you'.

I love it, and I suspect you would too.

CLOSING OUT: THE PROS AND CONS

IN BRAZILIAN JIU JITSU, 'CLOSING OUT' A TOURNAMENT MEANS THAT YOU AND YOUR TEAMMATE DECIDE NOT TO COMPETE, INSTEAD SHARING THE PODIUM WHEN REACHING A FINAL. THIS HAS BECOME A MUCH TALKED ABOUT TOPIC IN RECENT YEARS, WITH MANY HIGH-PROFILE TOURNAMENTS ENDING WITH FINALS BEING UNCONTESTED.

Walk into any academy in the world and ask people what they think of close outs; it's like throwing gas on a fire. People are not only split on this subject but they also feel STRONGLY about their position. It is a hot topic that athletes, tournament organisers and fans all have on their minds, so let's take a look at what I think are two of the top reasons for and against close outs at competitions.

REASONS TO CLOSE OUT

1. The concept of team unity - and winning as a team - goes back a long way in BJJ culture. During the late 90s/early 00s the likes of Gracie Barra and the Carlson Gracie Team were legendary across the world. Later on, Alliance, Brazilian Top Team and others also started to attain notable reputations in BJJ and MMA circles. 'Flying the flag' and representing your team has always been a huge honour. In the early Mundials, it was common to see teammates close out divisions and both claim to be world champions, as they were competing both as individuals and as a team.

In the first edition of the Mundials (1996) Amaury Bitetti and Ricardo Liborio both made it to the finals representing the Carlson Gracie Team and closed out the division. Former UFC champion, Murilo Bustamante, won his only black belt world title in the 1999 Mundials, closing out his division with former WEC champion and Pride veteran, Paulo Filho – again representing Carlson Gracie.

In MMA, jiu jitsu athletes rarely fought each other, and would definitely not compete against their own teammates. This early tradition still influences BJJ fighters who are/were taught by these early competitors. As recently as the 2013 and 2014 Mundials, Romulo Barral and Braulio Estima of Gracie Barra closed out their finals without fighting.

Famously, in the 2009 Mundials, Marcelo Garcia and Sergio Moraes of Alliance closed out and were said to have played "rock, paper, scissors" to decide who would take home the gold. When asked about competing against teammate Michael Langhi in a recent interview, Alliance's Lucas Lepri said he didn't "see the reason for it", as they were "close friends". These attitudes often result in teammates taking turns to claim gold at various tournaments – refusing to fight one another. As always, this approach is validated by the idea of team loyalty and honour.

> "IN MMA, JIU JITSU ATHLETES RARELY FOUGHT EACH OTHER, AND WOULD DEFINITELY NOT COMPETE AGAINST THEIR OWN TEAMMATES"

2. A common adage in BJJ is that it is a 'marathon and not a sprint'. Competition can improve an athlete's game, but it is only one tool. The work done in the academy day after day will have much more impact on a person's overall development. Having a training partner who is close to you in size, technique and ambition can be the ticket to huge improvements for an athlete. The free exchange of techniques, the lack of selfishness in training and the 'teamwork' that is inherent in an excellent training relationship can all be compromised when training partners start to see each other as 'the competition'. Many athletes see fighting at a competition as a way of potentially losing a great training partner, who often becomes a close friend. This can be too big a price to pay, even for a gold medal at the Mundials.

REASONS TO COMPETE

BJJ matches are fought one on one, and tournaments are set up to give us one champion at the end. This simple principle leads one to believe that a tournament is not over until one person is defined as the winner. In 2003, Roger Gracie and Pe de Pano contested the black belt Mundial open division final, with Pe de Pano winning via guard-pass. Both fighters represented Gracie Barra. Current ultra-heavyweight Mundial champion, Buchecha, beat his Checkmat teammate Alexander Trans in the 2014 final as well.

This obviously puts focus on the individual, but many people believe it's not only good for the individual, but good for the team as well. By not denying individuals the opportunity to face the top competition, in real competitive situations, this will lead to growth for all involved.

I have had conversations with grapplers from different backgrounds in wrestling and judo who all argue this position passionately. They believe competing against a teammate at competition does not affect the training environment and/or team atmosphere negatively.

2. The threat of close outs also makes it tough to 'sell' BJJ as a spectator sport. After all, who's interested in an event without a properly contested final? Some do not consider this a big deal, but new fans, sponsors and potential TV partners would perhaps think otherwise.

Consider the following quote from Copa Podio announcer, FIVE tournament promoter and Mendes bros black belt, Riccardo Ammendolia: "As someone who was brought up with the culture of jiu jitsu, I have respect for the athletes and I understand the division close out. It is a great feeling to place in the finals with your team mate. That being said, I think in order for jiu jitsu to ever become a professional sport, close outs cannot happen. I think if people wish to close out a division, they should elect a winner in the semi-finals instead. Not the finals."

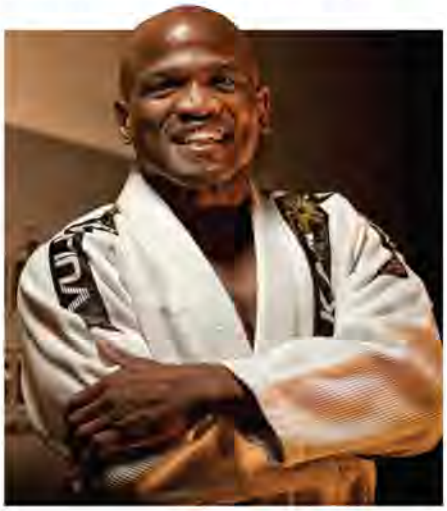
With sponsors and potential broadcasters more interested in the spectacle of BJJ, you can see how close outs are impeding the potential growth of BJJ. We all hope for athletes one day to receive benefits such as improved monetary opportunities, better training facilities and additional international competitive opportunities. So, here we are with two sides of a very compelling argument. For every Lucas Lepri/Michael Langhi, teammates who will not compete against each other, we have a Roger Gracie, who has continuously fought teammates in Mundial finals. What does that mean for the rest of us? What is the "right answer"? The question is further complicated when we consider that, in today's tournament scene, many teams come together and join forces to have a stronger presence at major events. 'Teammates' who have little or no interaction with each other are sometimes faced with this situation, especially at lower belt levels.

In 2008, American Bill Cooper (Paragon/Alliance) and Sergio Moraes of Alliance were in the black belt Mundial middleweight final and fought after both holding up an Alliance flag to the fans. The previous year, in the brown belt lightweight division of the Mundials, Cooper was drawn against Cobrinha student and Alliance "teammate" Michael Langhi in an early round and lost. Paragon, while part of Alliance, had/has its own network of schools, so there were no prohibitive relationships preventing these matches. So in this instance, some would argue that the definition of 'teammate' would imply general interaction, sharing a patch and/or infrequent training.

For me, it all comes down to personal choice. My students know I will not compete against a teammate because I believe it will negatively impact a training relationship. My students also know that I leave it up to them whether or not they want to compete if they find themselves in that situation. In terms of the larger issue of how this affects BJJ and its potential growth, I am conflicted. I understand the position that fans, sponsors and TV producers express towards uncontested finals, but BJJ is still an amateur sport where the athlete bears the responsibility of generating funds to support his/her training.

I would hesitate to force someone into competing just for the sake of attracting potential sponsors, but that's my humble opinion. I also see BJJ as both an individual AND a team sport, so I respect those who see closing out finals as part of honouring the team. Again, this brings me back to my position that there is not a right answer; there is only the answer that you, as an individual, feel comfortable with.

Sam Joseph is a 2nd degree Black Belt in BJJ under the Yamasaki Academy. He was awarded his black belt in 2007 and has vast experience as a teacher, BJJ competitor and MMA fighter.



MASTERCLASS

FOOTLOCK

1: Starting on your back in open guard with control of your opponent's right sleeve. **2:** Bring your hips up off the mat and isolate your opponent's left leg between your own legs. **3/4/5:** Make sure you have control of your opponent's left ankle with your right hand as you extend your legs to drop your opponent's hips down to the mat. **6:** Move your opponent's leg so that their foot now sits underneath your left armpit. **7/8/9:** Maintaining control of your opponent's leg, perform a technical stand-up to arrive with both of your knees on the mat. **10/11:** Roll over your left shoulder and secure a grip of your opponent's foot. **12:** Start to torque your opponent's toes down towards their butt to finish the submission.

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WITH:
MICHELLE NICOLINI

CHECKMAT'S MICHELLE NICOLINI IS ONE OF THE MOST DECORATED FEMALE JIU JITSU FIGHTERS IN HISTORY. MICHELLE HAS A STAGGERING EIGHT IBJJF BLACK BELT WORLD TITLES TO HER NAME, AS WELL AS MULTIPLE WPJJC TITLES. 2013 ALSO SAW THE 'FOOTLOCK QUEEN' PICK UP HER FIRST ADCC GOLD MEDAL. IN THIS INSTALMENT OF MASTERCLASS, NICOLINI RUNS THROUGH THE SETUPS THAT HELPED HER WIN GOLD AT THE MUNDIALS IN 2014, AS WELL AS SOME CLASSIC FOOTLOCKS!

KNEEBAR

1: Starting from spider guard. **2:** With your grip on your opponent's bicep, extend your left leg to bring their right foot forwards and their weight on top of you. **3:** Secure a grip around your opponent's left ankle with your right hand, placing your right foot on their hip at the same time. **4:** Bring your hips off the mat and place your left foot on your opponent's left hip so that both of your legs are isolating your opponent's left leg. **5:** Underhook your opponent's left ankle with your right hand. **6/7:** Extend your legs to drive your opponent's hips down to the mat. **8:** Escape your hips to the right and secure your opponent's left leg with both arms. **9:** Triangle your legs and extend your hips forward to finish the kneebar.

MICHELLE'S ARMLOCK

1: Starting from closed guard with control of both of your opponent's sleeves. **2:** Break your opponent's posture and escape your hips to your left. **3:** Bring your right foot onto your opponent's left bicep. **4/5:** Extend your right leg to lift your opponent's left arm up into the air. From here, you can hook your left foot around your opponent's back and underneath their left arm. **6/7:** Bring your left knee towards your chest and control your opponent's left arm with your left arm. **8:** Finally, contain your opponent's left arm with both of your own arms. Pull it towards you to finish the submission.

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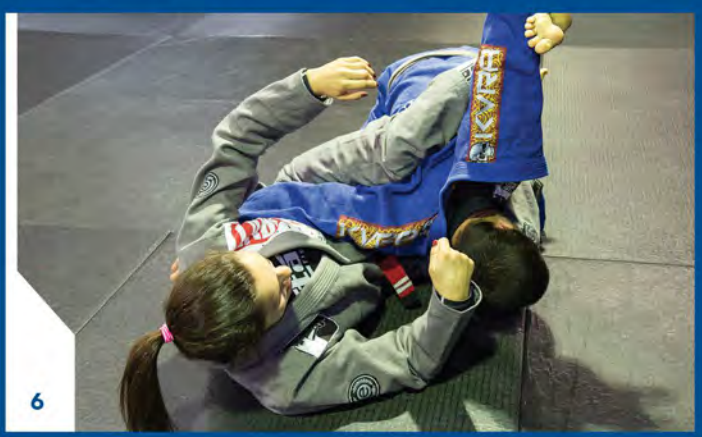
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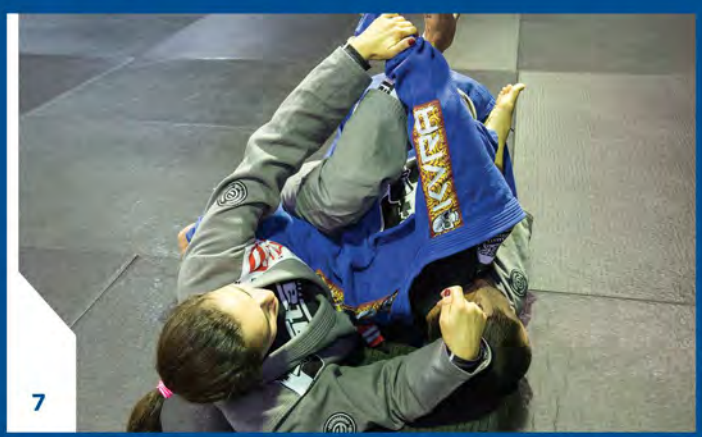
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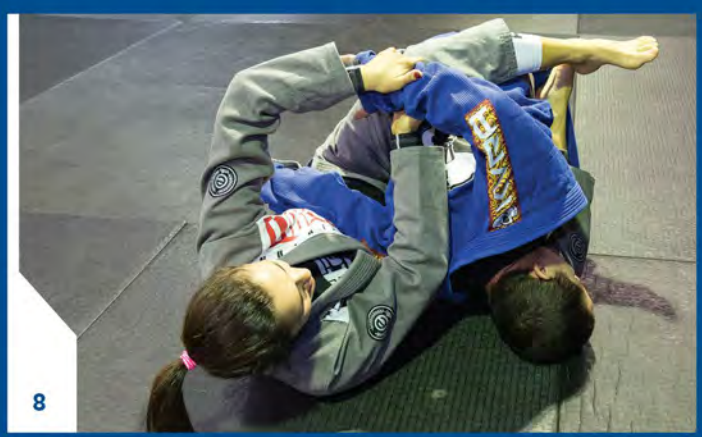
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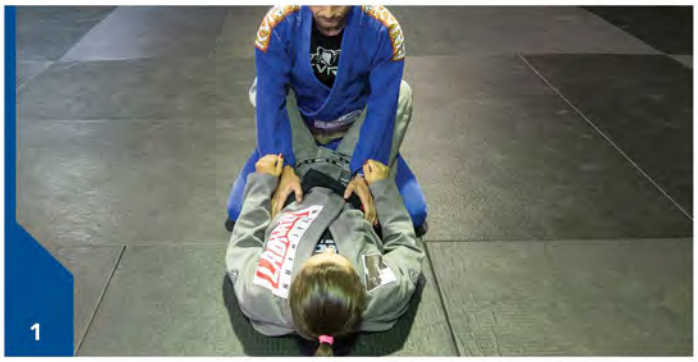
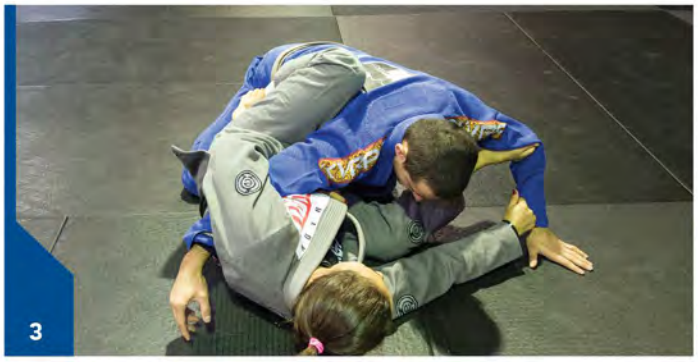
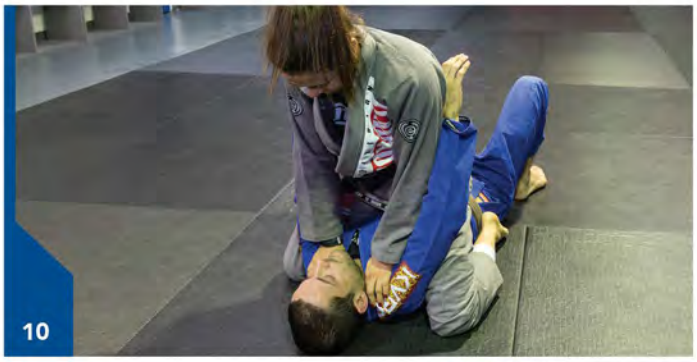
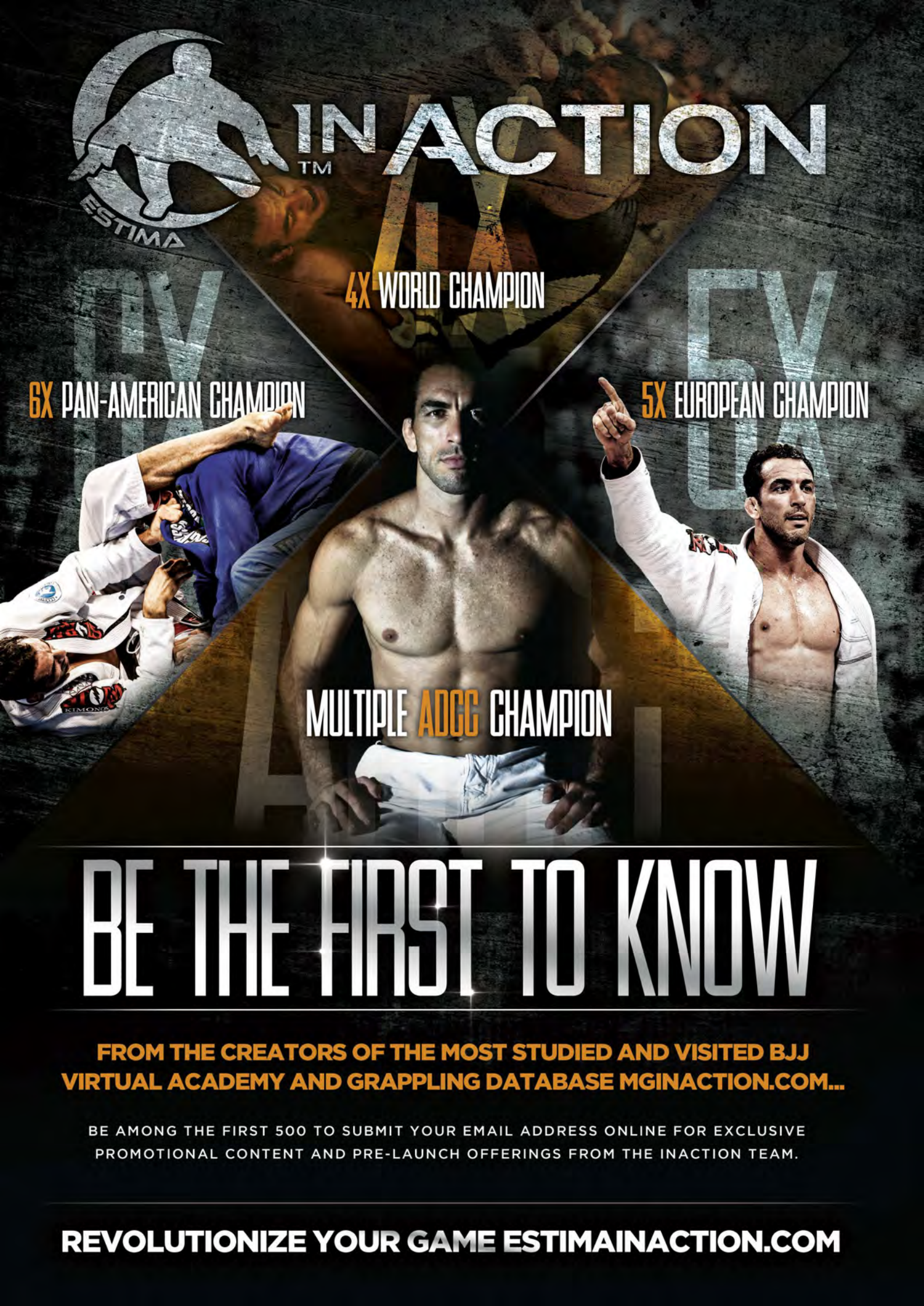
SWEEP TO MOUNT

1: Starting from closed guard with control of both of your opponent's sleeves. **2:** Break your opponent's posture and escape your hips to your left. **3:** Bring your right foot onto your opponent's left bicep. **4/5:** Extend your right leg to lift your opponent's left arm up into the air. From here, you can hook your left foot around your opponent's back and underneath their left arm. **6/7:** Start to swing your left leg down towards the mat. **8/9/10:** Start to control your opponent's head with your right arm as you transition to the mount.





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ASK THE DOCTOR

Braulio Estima is Jiu Jitsu Style's resident BJJ Doctor, helping prescribe our readers just the right tonic of tips to improve their grappling game.

Hi Braulio,
Did you – or do you – ever do anything specific to work on your breathing pattern when sparring? I'm of a good fitness level, but I can't help but realise that I hold my breath when in a scramble or fast-paced transition, which obviously leads to me gassing quickly. It's totally involuntary. Someone suggested I practise yoga breathing techniques, and I've read some interesting stories online from Kron Gracie about focusing on breathing. Is there anything specific you've ever worked on for this or has it never been a problem?

Thanks - *Sally*

Hi Sally,
This is a very interesting question, and something that I actually struggled with a lot in the past. In competition, if I was holding a position really tight and using too much power, I would totally forget to breathe – it was a big problem up until I was a purple belt.

When I realised I was getting gassed quickly, I decided something was wrong and started to think about my breathing – I became more cautious with my breathing. I educated myself to breathe on purpose, so I was forcing myself to breathe when fighting; exaggerating my breathing until it became second nature even when in a scramble. You often gas out when you hold your breath, which could be as a result of your opponent doing something unexpected. The more experience you get, the more you relax anyway, but try to force yourself to breathe even during the scrambles and transitions when you spar. Slowly, it will start to improve.

REVERSE DE LA RIVA SWEEP

Hi Braulio,
I'm a big gi player and my whole game revolves around reverse de la Riva and half-spider guard sweeps. As you can imagine, my recent transition into nogi has left me a little lost! Would you mind showing a sweep that works well for you in nogi from reverse de la Riva or general open guard?

Many thanks - Damon

Hi Damon,
This technique works well for me.

1: Starting on your back with control of your opponent's right ankle with your left hand. 2/3: To help bring your opponent's weight on top of you, brace your right hand on your own knee and bring both of your knees to your chest. This will bring their base on top of yours. 4: Underhook your opponent's left leg with your right arm. 5/6/7/8: Extend your legs backwards to sweep your opponent to the mat. Maintain control of their legs while progressing to the top position and start to work your pass.

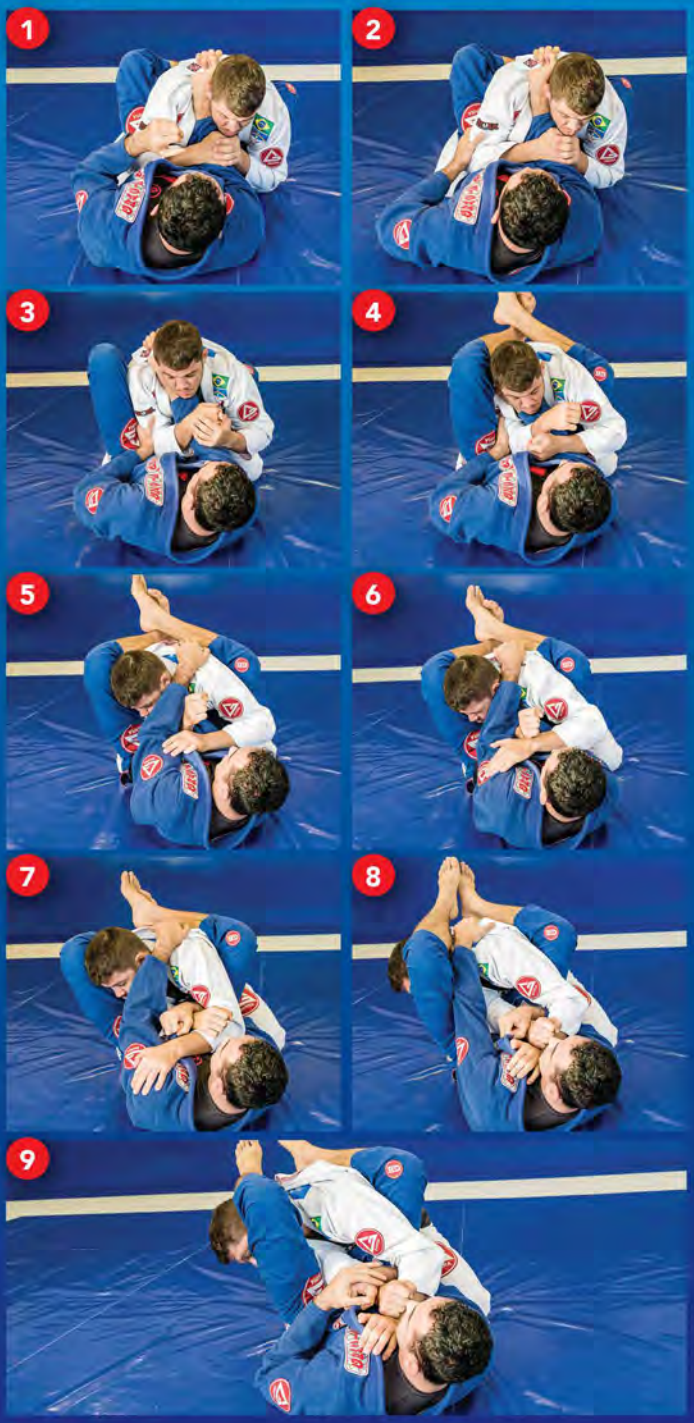
LAPEL ATTACKS

HI Braulio,
I quite often get control of my opponent's lapel over their shoulder when in my closed guard, so am able to control their posture well and attempt gi chokes. That said, I really struggle to mount any serious attacks from there. Do you have any attacks that work well when you've got control of one of your opponent's lapels over their shoulder from closed guard? I have a similar physique to you, so interested to see what you think!

Best wishes - *Mark*

Hi Mark,
Here's a good option.

1: You've secured a good grip of your opponent's lapel over their right shoulder, breaking their posture. 2/3: Control your opponent's right elbow with your left hand, at the same time open your guard and keep your left thigh tight against their right arm. 4: Lock your guard off again with your left leg over your opponent's right shoulder. 5/6: Next, bring your left arm in front of your opponent's face. Your left hand doesn't need to be on your opponent's artery to finish the choke, instead squeeze your legs together to get the tap. 7/8/9: If your opponent won't tap to the choke, you're in a great position to finish the armlock.



Hi Braulio,
How do you go about promoting students that have come to you from other academies – students that have been training for some time already? I had a purple belt arrive at my academy who had been at that level for three years and was more than ready for his brown belt. I just don't quite know how I feel about promoting someone who hasn't been training with me for that long, even though it's due really. What's your take on this?

Many thanks* - *Hugh

Hi Hugh,
I have had this happen many times, as it is quite common for people to relocate or just want to train somewhere else for a year or something like that. When it comes to the lower grades, it's not such a big problem. If there's a guy who arrives at your academy with one year of experience, he is still very early in his journey so it's not really an issue.

When you get high grades arriving, we always ask the student where they used to train and what their intentions are. So basically we try and establish if the student wants to train just for a few months, for a year, or if they have completely relocated to train with us. If someone arrives to train with us for the long run, then I treat them like any other student and grade them appropriately. If someone comes and says they are only training for a year, I would always contact their main instructor if it looks like they are due a grading. In cases like these it's always important to get the opinion of their main instructor and there must be a good line of communication.

I don't just give black belts to anyone, so if a very high standard brown belt arrives to train with me there must be a very long line of communication to establish what is going to happen in the long term when it comes to dealing with any potential promotions. The jiu jitsu community is very small, so we can always find out about students from other teams etc. if we need to before making any decisions about promotions.

Dear Braulio,
It's a bit of an old topic now I guess, but I was recently travelling in America and decided to do a little training. I'll leave the academy unnamed, but there were adults wearing green belts on the mat. I was interested to hear your opinion on this as a teacher, decorated competitor and member of Gracie Barra. I'm a GB affiliate, but I'd personally find it very hard to implement if green belts were rolled out at GB schools.

Cheers* - *Tom

Hi Tom,
The green belt doesn't exist in the IBJJF documentation. I believe the IBJJF is the most prominent governing body in our sport, so I always follow what the IBJJF lays out as the rules and regulations. Gracie Barra also will always follow the IBJJF regulations.

According to the rules, if you are a green belt, you automatically become a blue belt once you become 16-years old. That's the system that is in place and that is where the green belt is used. So basically I don't agree with the green belt, and I see it more as a business tool than something that is being introduced to improve BJJ. It's a tool being used to give students a short-term goal if they cannot wait for their blue belt. I've also seen people using blue and white checked belts and things like that!

I chose not to deviate from the IBJJF system. What happens if one of my students gets a green belt and then does an internet search trying to find a competition to go to? So I don't follow this green belt idea; I don't agree – but neither does Gracie Barra so don't worry :)

Hi Braulio,
You're obviously very well versed in all areas of jiu jitsu, and seem extremely open to learning new techniques all the time. However, I wanted to ask if there were any specific positions that you never even attempted to learn, or found very quickly you didn't want to learn? Also, how long do you work on a new position before you give up on it and leave it alone? I struggle to adapt to some new positions (namely 50/50 at the moment) and just can't seem to get anything to work from there – let alone have any fun! Is there a point when I should just rule the position out and say "it doesn't work for me?"

Big fan!* - *Jim

Hi Jim,
Of course there will always be techniques that work better for different people depending on their body type and general skill set. I never rule out a position, instead I study something hoping to at least understand the concept behind it. You will always feel awkward when trying something new, just like if you started trying to write with your wrong hand. I have always liked to experiment and explore, so it's natural for me to try new things. In fact, just this week I've learned three HUGE new things that I can't wait to implement into my competition game – it never stops.

If something works for a guy, like Ryan Hall with the 50/50, then there must be something technical behind it that we can all benefit from in some way. That doesn't necessarily mean we will all be able to do it in competition, but there will be a concept we can grasp.

I never really give myself a time period to explore a position, so I don't say 'Ok, I've got three weeks to try and make this work'. There are techniques that will work for me on lower level guys, but not so much in competitions or against black belts. I see that as a challenge and an opportunity to refine and develop.

MOUNT TO BACK TAKE

Hi Braulio,
I've managed to become pretty good at getting to the mount position, but other than looking for the cross-collar choke and Americana, I'm lost for submission options. Are there any attacks or transitions to other positions you like to use from the mount?

Thanks* - *Steve

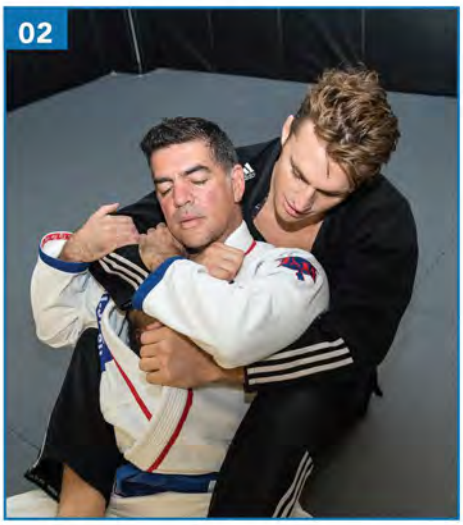
Hi Steve
It can be difficult to attack from the mount, so check out this option – go to the back!

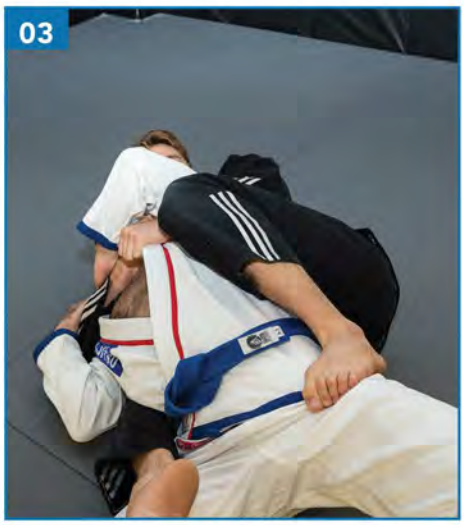
1: You are in mount and your opponent is defending their neck 2: Control their head with your right arm. 3/4: Move your opponent's right arm up against their own head. 5: Bring your own head behind your opponent's right elbow so they cannot move it back to their side. At the same time make sure you control their right wrist with your left hand 6: Next, underhook your opponent's right arm with your left arm. 7: Keep your arm grips tight and move into a side mount, ready to take the back. 8/9: sit back on your butt and transition to the back, 10: Finish with a collar choke.

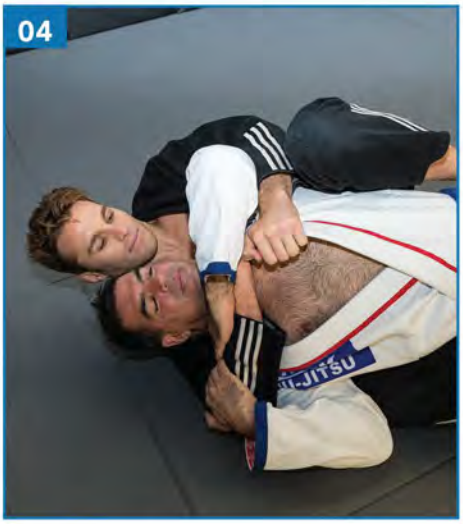
TECHNIQUE WITH

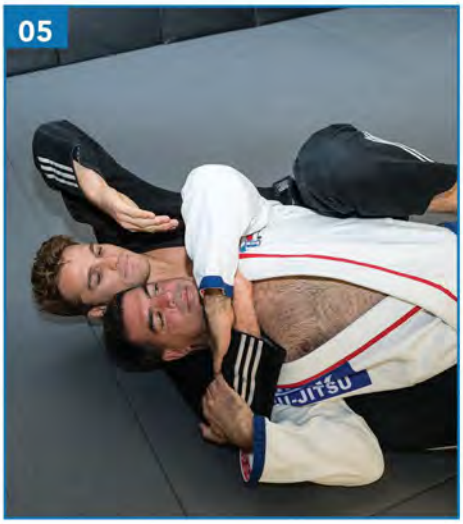
SHOULDER LOCK FROM BACK ATTACK

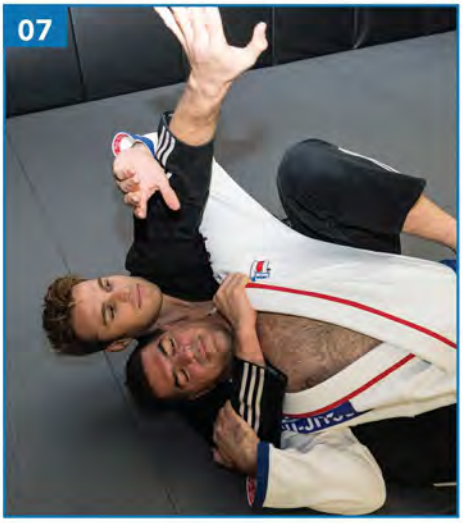
1: You have secured a seatbelt grip on your opponent's back. **2/3:** Start to slide your hand into your opponent's collar and lean back to attack with a choke. **4:** Your opponent starts to defend your choke, so it's time to start working for a different submission. **5/6:** Release your left grip on your opponent's hand and swim it underneath their left arm. **7/8:** Move your left arm backwards to open up your opponent's shoulder. **9:** Secure your left hand on your opponent's elbow, with your left knee pushing up against the back of their arm. From here, you can crank their shoulder, finishing with a modified Americana.

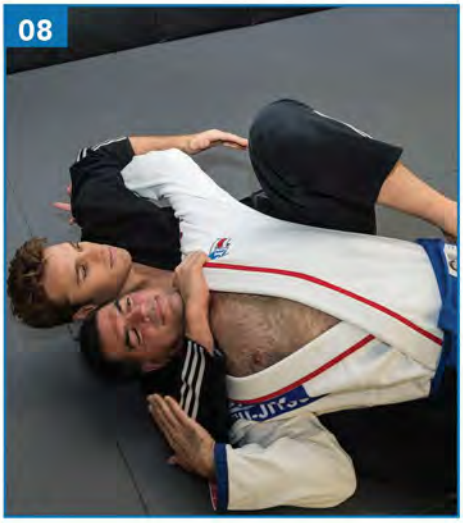


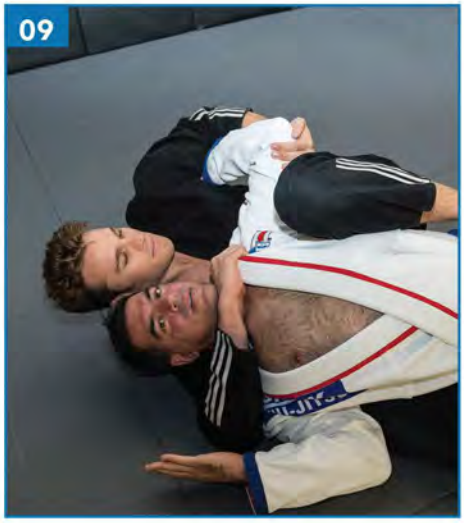










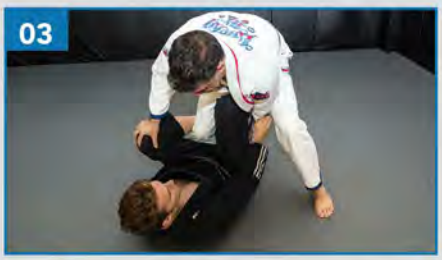


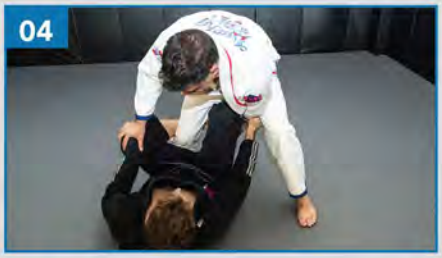
CLARK GRACIE

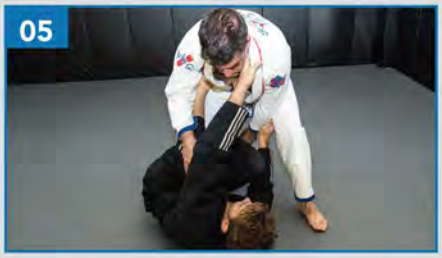
SHOWCASING SOME OF HIS FAVOURITE TECHNIQUES INSIDE THIS ISSUE OF JIU JITSU STYLE IS MIDDLEWEIGHT CONTENDER, CLARK GRACIE! CLARK IS A PAN AM BLACK BELT CHAMPION AND WORLD NOGI CHAMPION, AS WELL AS A COPA PODIO AND METAMORIS PRO ATHLETE.

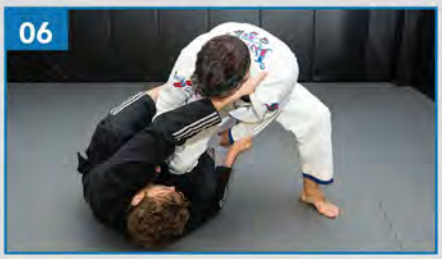
REVERSE DE LA RIVA SWEEP

1: Starting on your back in regular de la Riva. **2/3/4:** Your opponent controls your right leg and starts to push it down to the mat. As they reach for your trousers, control their left sleeve. **5:** Switch to reverse de la Riva, gaining a collar grip with your left hand. **6/7:** As your opponent attempts to knee-slice, move your hips underneath them and at the same time pull your opponent on top of you. Notice that you still have control of their left hand, so they cannot base to prevent this sweep. **8/9:** Roll over your shoulder and extend your legs to complete the sweep.



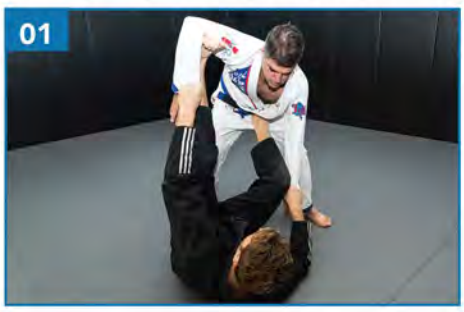


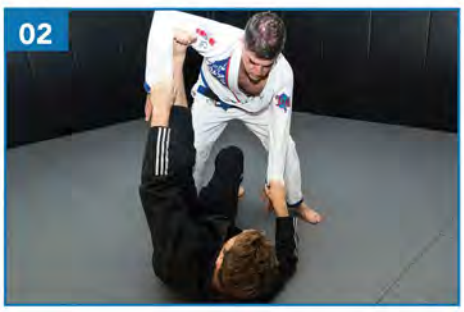


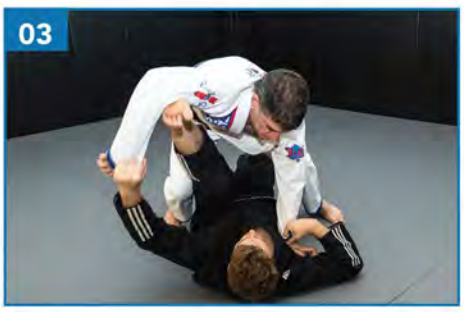


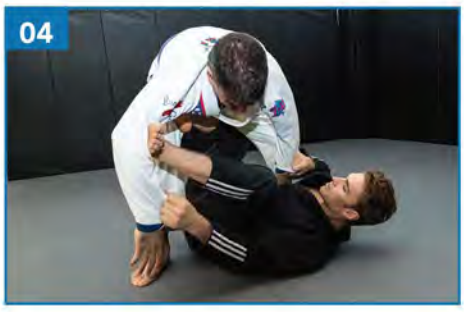
SPIDER GUARD SWEEP

1: Starting on your back in spider guard. **2/3:** Move your right foot to the mat, then pull your opponent towards you with your grips so their hips are on top of you. **4:** From here, control your opponent's left ankle with your right hand and arrive in a modified single-leg x-guard. **5/6:** Pull your opponent's right shoulder towards you as you extend your legs to perform the sweep.



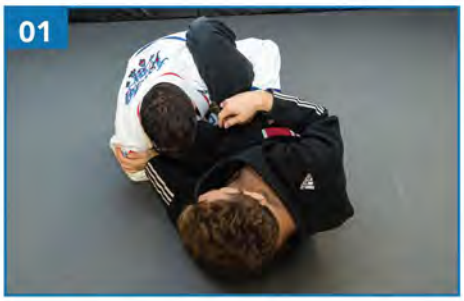


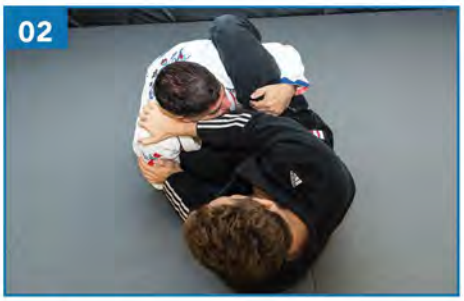


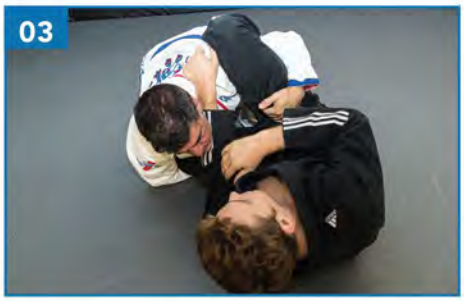


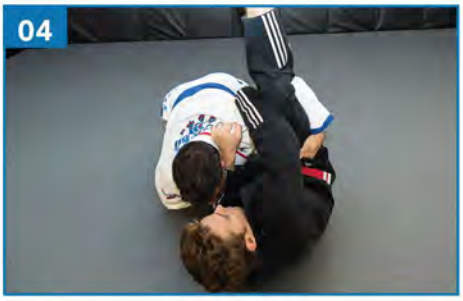
CRUCIFIX ATTACKS

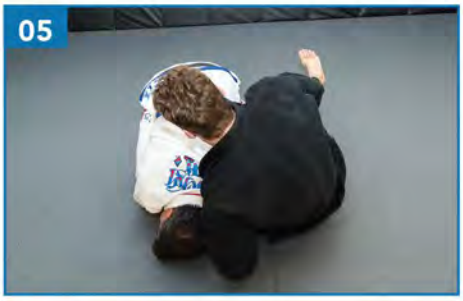
1: Starting on your back in half guard, with your opponent starting to close down the space and pass. **2:** Post on your opponent's right shoulder to prevent the pass. **3:** Switch your left hand to your opponent's right shoulder. **4/5:** Extend your right leg, and control your opponent's left triceps with your right hand. In a quick motion, kick your right leg down and arm drag your opponent towards you. **6:** Bring your right arm across your opponent's back and base out on your left hand. **7:** Start to progress to your knees, with your legs controlling your opponent's left arm and establishing the crucifix. **8:** Lock off a kimura grip on your opponent's right arm. From here, you are ready to roll your opponent. **9/10/11:** Drop your left shoulder to the mat and roll your opponent over. **12/13:** From here, you can finish with collar choke. **14/15/16:** Alternatively, switch your leg positioning to lock up a reverse omoplata position on your opponent's left arm. **17/18:** Release your right hand grips, sit up and control your opponent's left knee. Continue sitting forward to finish the submission.

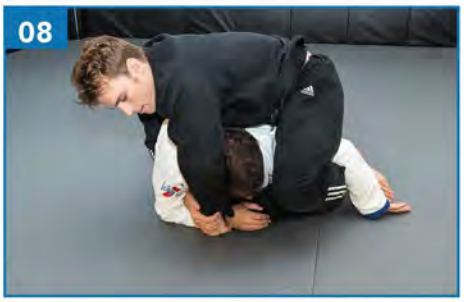












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you can see it in all things"
- Miyamoto Musashi
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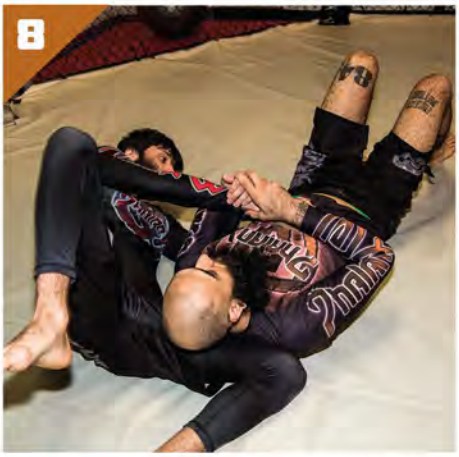
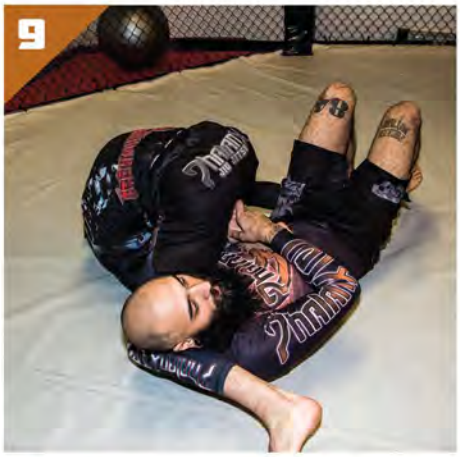
GUARD PASS TO KIMURA

1: Your opponent is in reverse de la Riva and you are looking to pass. **2/3/4:** Pin their hips to the mat with your right hand, at the same time perform a back step with your right leg to clear their guard and arrive with knee-on-belly. **5:** Your opponent will often attempt to push your knee. As they do this, control their left wrist with your right hand. **6/7:** In a quick motion, roll over your left shoulder and lock up a kimura grip. **8/9:** Drag your hips forwards using your grip, then swing your right leg back over your opponent's body so that both your knees are on the mat, but your left calf is behind their neck. **10/11:** Next, roll over your right shoulder, maintaining your kimura grip. **12:** As you arrive with your back on the mat you can finish the submission.





SHEDDING THE GI

10TH PLANET FREAKS

Shedding the Gi inside the latest issue of JJS are Geo and Richie Martinez – aka The 10th Planet FREAKS! Geo and Richie are black and brown belt competitors respectively, with Richie also holding a 3-1 pro MMA record. The brothers from California are also skilled break-dancers – pretty epic!

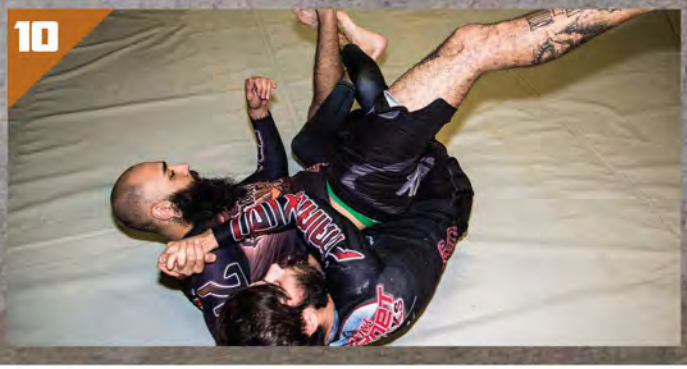
Here, The FREAKS showcase some of their favourite nogi setups from the 10th Planet system.

GUARD PASS

1: Your opponent is on their back, so start by isolating their right leg with both hands. **2:** Perform a leg-drag, bringing their right leg across your hips. **3/4:** As your opponent attempts to escape their hips, you must drive your right knee down to the mat. **5/6/7/8:** In a quick motion, continue to turn towards your left, maintaining pressure with your knee on the mat and against your opponent's right leg. This will force their body towards the right and lift their butt off the mat. Make sure you swing your left leg all the way over to the other side of your opponent as you rotate. **9:** Arrive in turtle position – on top and ready to attack.

HALF GUARD TO THE TRUCK

1: You have established a great position from your half guard, with underhook control and your body locked against your opponent's side. **2/3:** Unlock your guard and switch your foot positioning so that your left leg comes inside your opponent's right leg. From here you can thread your right leg backwards and start coming up to your knees. **4:** Your opponent must secure a whizzer with their right arm to prevent you from attacking their back. **5:** Bring your right foot close to your butt and rest it over the top of your opponent's right ankle. **6:** From here, bring your hips slightly around to the left and insert your left hook. **7:** As your opponent still has their whizzer, it makes it difficult to go straight to the back, but you can attack with the Truck. **8/9:** Sit backwards onto your butt and lock off the truck with your legs, at the same time keep control of your opponent's shoulder. **10:** Notice the grapevine positioning of your legs from here – this is the Truck. The Truck is a great position to start lots of different submissions.



BACK ATTACK TO TRIANGLE

1: You are on your opponent's back and have secured a seatbelt grip, but they are defending by controlling your right arm. **2:** Switch your left hand to grip your opponent's left wrist. **3:** Push their left arm towards the floor. **4:** From here, you can often lock up a choke with your right hand, but your opponent is being stubborn and defending well. **5/6:** Quickly switch from attacking your opponent's neck to circling your right arm over their shoulder and locking it off against your own leg. **7:** From here, gain double wrist control on your opponent's left arm. **8:** Next, release your left hand and start to attack your opponent's neck. **9:** If they are still managing to defend the choke even though you've locked up their right arm, you can attack with a sneaky triangle. **10/11/12:** Stop attacking with your left arm and start to sit backwards, offering just enough room for your opponent to think they can turn into your guard. As they turn, catch them in the triangle.

TECHNIQUE

DE LA RIVA SWEEPS WITH NICK BROOKS

SWEEP ONE

1/2: Your opponent is on their knees trying to open your guard. They are also pushing on your belt with both arms and backing away using their knee for more pressure. **3:** As your opponent pressures your guard, open your legs and place one leg in the middle and the other to the outside of their leading leg, making sure your right foot is on their hip. **4:** Next, move your right foot from their hip to their thigh and push to create the space to secure a de la Riva hook with your left leg. **5/6:** Turn your body to create an angle, base out with your right leg for extra leverage. Extend your left leg and turn to your side to sweep. **7:** Release your opponent's sleeve and control their ankle to complete the sweep. **8/9:** Control the sweep with knee-on-belly to finish.

THE DE LA RIVA HOOK IS A FANTASTIC PLATFORM FOR MOUNTING A NUMBER OF ATTACKING SWEEPS. THE GREAT THING ABOUT THE POSITION IS THAT YOU CAN SWEEP YOUR OPPONENT IN A NUMBER OF DIRECTIONS, MAKING IT HARD FOR YOUR OPPONENT TO PREDICT WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO DO NEXT. HERE ARE SOME OF MY FAVOURITE ATTACKS!

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SWEEP TO MOUNT

1/2: Your opponent is on their knees trying to open your guard. They are also pushing on your belt with both arms and backing away using their knee for more pressure. As your opponent pressures your guard, open your legs and place one leg to the middle and the other to the outside of their leading leg, making sure your right foot is on their hip. **3/4:** Next, move your right foot from their hip to their thigh and push to create the space to secure a de la Riva hook with your left leg. **5/6:** Keep pushing with your right foot, at the same time extend your de la Riva hook. Pull your opponent's sleeves towards your hips to sweep. **7:** Slide your right knee up as high as possible before releasing your de la Riva hook and stepping over into mount. **8:** Keep control of your opponent's sleeves and push your hips forwards to secure the sweep and mount position.

OVERHEAD SWEEP

1/2: Your opponent is on their knees trying to open your guard. They are also pushing on your belt with both arms and backing away using their knee for more pressure.**3:** As your opponent pressures your guard, open your legs and place one leg to the middle and the other to the outside of their leading leg, making sure your right foot is on their hip. **4:** Next, move your right foot from their hip to their thigh and push to create the space to secure a de la Riva hook with your left leg. **5:** Pull your opponent towards you with your de la Riva hook and sleeve control to get their hips over your hips. **6:** Move under your opponent, using your hooks to pick them off the floor and roll over your shoulder. **7/8:** Extend your legs over your shoulders while pushing your opponent's sleeves towards their hips to complete the overhead sweep. **9:** Follow your opponent by completing the roll and arriving in mount.

SWEEP 2

1: As your opponent pressures your guard, open your legs and place one leg to the middle and the other to the outside of their leading leg, making sure your right foot is on their hip. **2:** Next, move your right foot from their hip to their thigh and push to secure the space to secure a de la Riva hook with your left leg. **3:** Push both your legs forward to make your opponent sit back on his butt, at the same time move your right hand from your opponent's left sleeve to their collar. **4/5/6:** Fold your left leg backwards so it's behind your butt, at the same time push your opponent backwards using your leg movement for more leverage to come on top and complete the sweep.

THE ULTIMATE BJJ EXPERIENCE

HANNAH GORMAN

Over the past couple of months we have been spoilt with a selection of jiu jitsu spectacles to keep us entertained. Metamoris hosted its fifth show, whilst Copa Podio and the Eddie Bravo Invitational also took place. Most of these events were held in the most popular format at the moment- submission only. Each event has its own pros and cons and there are many people I have spoken to who do not hesitate to share their opinion and offer suggestions on how to improve each event. But, what if we could design our own event, the perfect jiu jitsu spectacle? Here's what I'd have:

SUB ONLY

Submission only is what submission grappling is all about. It shows off more of the art as competitors are free to move and transition without fear of losing points, or worse - losing to a dreaded advantage. Not only is the submission only format more interesting for enthusiasts to watch, but it becomes more enjoyable for spectators who do not train. It eradicates that frustrating scenario of being up on advantages and stalling out for a win. Sub only events are so popular at the moment that many academies have sub only rolling sessions rather than strict five minute points based rolls. Not only is this better to watch in an event, but it's better for individual progression in jiu jitsu. My opinion is that it encourages fluidity, movement and transitioning, rather than sweeping someone then proceeding to pin them for four minutes in order to 'win'. Submission only is definitely the way forward for more exciting and progressive jiu jitsu.

NO TIME LIMIT MAIN EVENT

Many of the current events that adopt a submission only format do so with a time limit of usually fifteen or twenty minutes. If no submission occurs then the fight is declared a draw. Personally, I find this very frustrating. The concept of submission only should imply that a submission (and only a submission) will declare a winner. So there must be a winner. Having two high level competitors fight a twenty minute long battle that ends up being declared a draw is the biggest anti-climax ever. Some argue that having no time limits would force there to be a winner. But critics think the winner will only be decided due to tiredness - not lack of ability.

I would have to disagree. A massive part of jiu jitsu is efficiency of movement. No time limit fights would not come down to who has the best cardio so much as who has preserved their energy the most efficiently. Preserving your energy better makes you a more efficient jiu jitsu practitioner. Losing because you were tired is just as legitimate as losing to an armbar because you got tired defending it. Regardless, the need for a winner especially in main event is a necessity. Here's how that winner could be decided:

OVERTIME

The Eddie Bravo Invitational (EBI) boasts my favourite format of a submission only grappling competition. Here's why; if there is no submission, the fight goes into overtime, when each competitor gets to start on the back of their opponent (or in another advantageous position). The fight begins and they have to try to submit (or escape) as quickly as possible. There is no time limit, but if the person escapes the position and avoids submitting then they switch and the other person has a chance to submit them. That's round one of overtime. Say, for example the first person managed to submit their opponent, but when they switched, the other person couldn't finish the submission, then the first person has to submit again in the second round of overtime to win. The other competitor can still win, but they have to submit their opponent and not get submitted, which would take it to round three of overtime where it keeps going until someone gets submitted twice in a row and does not manage to submit their opponent.

It kind of reminds me of the skate game, horse, or sudden death penalties in football. As if that was not enough, the cash prize is massively reduced if a fight resorts to overtime. In the case of the EBI, the prize of $25,000 is reduced to $5000 if the fight goes into overtime. Everything about this format encourages active jiu jitsu, and rewards those who hunt for the finish, which ultimately provides for very entertaining grappling matches. I'm all for encouraging entertaining grappling rather than punishing boring grappling with penalties.

MIXED GENDER TEAM EVENTS

I would also adopt the same day weigh-in format that is used for the Copa Podio grand prix. I like the format that includes a six to eight man tournament where a selection of hand picked competitors would compete against each other. This could be run as a mixed gender team event where fighters from Checkmat (like Buchecha and Nicolini) would compete against fighters from Atos (Like Torres and Galvao). Competing alongside their male counterparts in a team event such as this may give female athletes some additional exposure, which is always a good thing! I'd go for a setup where there are six members to a team, three of each sex. The match-ups would be decided by a coin flip (males vs males, females vs females). Each win would earn their team a point and the team with the most points wins the tournament.

MIXED WEIGHT FIGHTS

Whilst most of the submission only events have varying weight categories (some catch weight, some IBJJF weight categories), there have not been many match ups where competitors have been purposely mis-matched. We see it all the time in open weight divisions at IBJJF competitions, so why not in submission only events? A carefully thought out mixed weight match could create quite the spectacle and would provide the chance to see a real technique vs size match up.

LIVE STREAM

One of the reasons I have never purchased a Copa Podio stream is from what I've heard about it on social media. A live stream, at the very least, needs to be good quality (visual and audio) and reliable. Well, if you expect to build and retain an audience for future events it does! Optional extras that would really make an event stand out would be the ability to choose what angle you watched the fight from. There would need to be a selection of different cameras positioned in a variety of spots, like at stage level, a bird's eye view and a ref cam, to name a few. The ability to rewind and watch replays of submission or transitions live would be a benefit - like pausing and rewinding live TV.

There isn't one element that makes an event successful; the current events are proving to be very successful indeed! But fine tuning and adding in some of the elements mentioned above might be a solution to many of the gripes people have about some of the current submission only tournaments.

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LEARNING FROM OUR PERFORMANCES

THE IMPORTANCE OF ATTRIBUTIONS

To really make the most of the learning opportunities in BJJ, we need to reflect on our performances. Whether it's in training or in competition, it's good to spend some time thinking about what worked and what didn't. And it's even more important to figure out why you experienced a particular outcome.

Bernard Weiner was one of the first psychologists to investigate the reasons we give for our successes and failures. He called these explanations *causal attributions*, and he highlighted the crucial link between these attributions and our motivation and performance in the future. Weiner found that the exact reasons we give for our success or failure don't count so much. It's the *type* of explanation that matters. Specifically, Weiner suggested that attributions can be categorised in three ways: internal versus external, controllable versus uncontrollable, and stable versus unstable.

The first category, locus of causality, is about whether the reasons for your performance are because of you or because of someone or something else. The second category, locus of control, is about whether you believe you can control the events affecting you. Stability, the third category, is about how likely you think the cause will happen again in the future.

Take, for example, a competitor who goes to a tournament and wins a couple of matches but doesn't medal. She views this as a poor performance. She believes it was caused by inadequate preparation. Although disappointed with her performance, she is optimistic about her next competition because she can now devote herself to her training, adjust her nutrition plan and cut weight effectively and safely. She is committed and puts in hard work for the upcoming tournament.

This jiu jitsu practitioner has made an internal, controllable and unstable attribution. She attributes her poor performance to a lack of preparation on her part. So the cause is something that she personally did (or didn't do). While she might not have put in enough effort for her recent tournament, she believes a more dedicated approach to her next competition is within her control. Her effort levels vary over time and so she can choose to put in more effort for upcoming events. All of this leads to optimistic expectations about her performance in the future and a willingness to take actions that maximise the likelihood of achieving her desired outcomes.

In contrast, another competitor in the same situation feels less positive about the probability of success in the future. She believes that she failed to medal because of a lack of support from her coach and teammates, and because of a biased referee who made some unfair decisions. She hopes that her next tournament will have more competent referees and that her team will be more supportive. Nevertheless, she finds it hard to motivate herself in training.

"TO REALLY MAKE THE MOST OF THE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES IN BJJ, WE NEED TO REFLECT ON OUR PERFORMANCES, WHETHER IT'S IN TRAINING OR IN COMPETITION"

This second athlete's attributional style is not so useful. She has made an external and uncontrollable attribution. She perceives that her disappointing experience is someone else's fault and that there was little she could to influence events. The cause of her 'failure' may be stable or unstable. It depends on whether she expects the same official to referee her matches in future tournaments. Either way, she doesn't get to decide who the referee is in the future. This assessment of the situation may well be accurate. It might allow our competitor to deal with negative emotions by directing her anger towards other people but it has its limitations.

Objectively, the outcome for both of these athletes was the same. Neither person achieved their goal of medalling but they have very different attributional styles from one another. This is crucial because how we interpret the causes of good or poor performances leads to different emotions, which in turn influence how we think, feel and behave as we progress in our jiu jitsu journey.

These attributional styles also come into play when we experience success. Research into attribution theory suggests that some people are prone to a self-serving bias, where they attribute good performances internally and bad performances externally and uncontrollably. This tactic enables the performer to maintain self-esteem in the face of failure and to bolster it in success. Such an approach can be helpful for managing difficult feelings immediately after a loss, but it doesn't encourage the self-reflection that can be useful for figuring out how to improve.

While making internal attributions for success can help to boost our confidence, we also need to pay attention to the controllability of such attributions. You may feel that you did well because you put in a lot of hard work or you may feel that you were successful because of your jiu jitsu ability. Both effort and ability attributions are internal. Your effort levels are down to you, and your ability is also within you. However, we often view ability as fixed, which means it is stable and uncontrollable. If we attribute our good performance to being naturally talented at jiu jitsu then it doesn't really encourage us to put in the deliberate practise that actually improves our game.

So the next time you find yourself, your friends or your coach bemoaning illness, bad luck or a cheating opponent, just pause for a moment. Be honest with yourself and consider whether there's anything else that might explain your performance. Ask yourself what can *you* do that's within *your* control to bring about a successful outcome next time you step on the mats?

Dr Rebecca L. Hill is a Sport and Exercise Psychologist chartered by the British Psychological Society, and an Education Adviser at the University of Exeter. She is a brown belt under Professor Victor Estima and was 2014 European and British Champion. She blogs about sport psychology and BJJ at www.rebeccalhill.com.

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HAVE YOU EVER HEARD THIS SAYING? *'DIETING IS EASY; IT'S LIKE RIDING A BIKE. EXCEPT THE BIKE IS ON FIRE. AND SO IS THE GROUND. AND SO ARE YOU, BECAUSE YOU'RE IN HELL'.*

Well a lot of athletes feel this way when they set out to either make weight for a competition or lose a bit of fat to be more competitive on the mats. A lot of diets start out really well with the first few pounds coming off pretty easily, then it slows down or stops.

What happened? Is it just the nature of diets for them to slow down or are you sabotaging yourself from the start?

The honest truth is it's a bit of both. It is rare for people to achieve steady fat loss all the way to their goal with zero adjustments. Most of the time you will need to make changes either to your training or your nutrition to give you the results that you desire.

The problem comes with knowing what to change and when. It's not the lack of will that hold athletes back as I have yet to meet a serious one that wasn't dedicated to their goals. It's not the availability of knowledge either; just type the words 'fat' and 'loss' into Google and see how many hits you get back (31,600,000, for those who care).

The problem is that the sheer wealth of information is just too much. People have no idea where to start when setting up a plan or what method will work for them best. I've lost count of the number of times a person has come to me either eating like a small bird or thinking that eating junk all day is fine as they need to 'fuel the machine'. Most people would do best with a sensible plan that is free from fads and crazy products and is based on whole, nutritious food from natural sources.

However, even with this approach it is possible to sabotage your diet right from the start. There are certain things that you could be doing, or leaving out of your nutrition that will be costing you right from the beginning. Most people see some of these things as 'healthy' and others are so simple they're crazy. But I've seen this time and time again with clients and people who come to me for help.

Make sure you address these issues when you are setting up a nutrition plan or you run the risk of making your programme much harder than it needs to be!

MAKE SURE YOU SET UP THE DIET CORRECTLY

I know I say this in every article but I cannot stress it enough! Making sure that you get your diet set up correctly from the start will save you from many headaches as you go on. Having a good starting point will give you room to make adjustments and to ensure that you cover all your bases, so that the plan is healthy and supplements your performance goals (smashing people on the mat or in competition).

Make sure that your plan has a wide range of foods from natural sources and processed foods are kept to a minimum. Make sure you have plenty of vegetables and a variety of macro nutrient sources (i.e. not eating just chicken and lettuce).

If all the information out there confuses you, either speak to your coach or talk to a professional. Any nutritional coach worth his salt will answer a few questions as long as you are polite and don't take it too far by asking him for a full plan.

PAY ATTENTION TO WATER INTAKE

Water is insanely important.

Water is used for pretty much all of the processes in the human body including muscle building and fat loss. Many people think that the odd glass of water is enough and as long as they are getting a bit they will be ok.

This isn't the case.

From my experience I would say that 2 litres per day is the minimum that everyone should shoot for. However, based on my experience with clients I would say that the sweet spot is always between 3-5 litres per day. This seems to have the best effect on fat loss and hydration. As BJJ practitioners should never be water cutting (due to same day weigh-ins) this is a great place to start for all athletes.

Never guess your water intake either. Always measure it out at the start of the day so you know exactly how much you have to drink each day. This is probably one of the biggest downfalls I see with people.

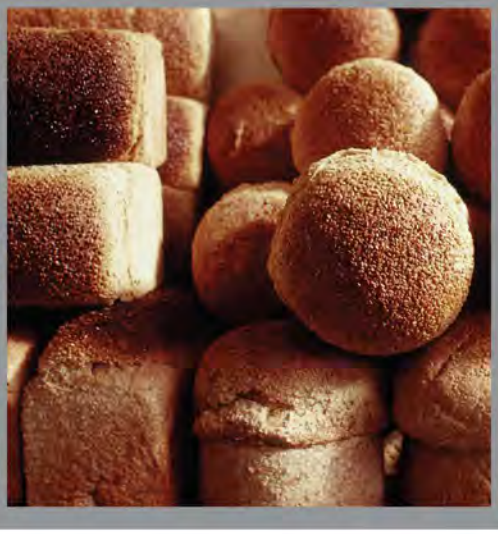
5 THINGS HOLDING BACK YOUR DIET

TAKE CARE OF YOUR DIGESTIVE SYSTEM

This is something that everyone overlooks, no matter what sport they are in. If you don't look after your digestive system you are not going to be able to digest food properly. This means that if your body can't effectively break down the nutrients that you give it, it will not be able to utilise them optimally to produce the results that you need.

Make sure that you are not eating foods that cause you any kind of distress such as bloating, constipation, gas, or giving you unpleasant bowel movements (hard to pass, loose etc).

To help aid clients with this I make sure that they have a probiotic every day and take in foods that are rich in fibre. When it comes to dieting you want to try to aim for 12g of fibre for every 1000 calories that you consume. Your body's ability to pass waste effectively plays a big part in fat loss and being healthy.



MANAGE YOUR STRESS

This is probably the hardest factor to manage in any diet plan. Stress has a massive effect on our bodies' ability to function. When we are stressed it makes it ten times harder to lose fat.

While it is impossible to avoid stress completely in the real world thanks to jobs, kids, getting smashed by the brand new white belt in the gym, it is possible to manage it. This means that you take certain steps to reduce your stress levels and to relax.

This includes things like,

- Meditation
- Taking naps/getting 8 hours of sleep per night
- Baths, Jacuzzis and other recovery techniques
- Yoga and stretching
- Not looking at a screen of any type 1 hour before bed
- Participating in exercise that allows you to de-stress (like more BJJ training)
- Letting little things go (like not chasing down the person that cut you up this morning and beating them to death with their own thermos etc.)

I personally find BJJ to be the biggest stress reliever simply because it's impossible to think about anything else while doing it. It puts you completely in the moment and all of life's other distractions melt away.

KNOW YOUR LIMITS WHEN IT COMES TO CHEATS AND FREE MEALS.

I've lost count over the number of times I've seen crazy cheats ruin sensible plans.

Let's get a few things out of the way. Yes, cheat meals can help you stay on track psychologically with a diet and used correctly they can even aid in fat loss. I use many different forms of cheat meals with clients as it improves compliance with diet ten-fold.

But I know what clients can have and when. Two weeks out from a competition and you've still got a good bit of weight to lose? Sorry, that cheat isn't happening. I've seen countless people who are unable to stop if given enough free rein. Some people go as far as to rationalise a full weekend's worth of binge eating because they have stayed on diet all week. I'm sorry, but two full days of eating crap will undo all your hard work.

Cheats are fine as long as they are used correctly. All my clients get at least one cheat meal all the way up to their competition or fight and it is only in VERY rare circumstances that I have had to take them out. Again, if you don't know when to add in cheats to get the maximum results, speak to your coach or a professional.

Make sure that before you start any fat loss plan you have all the pieces in place to allow you to achieve the best possible result. Don't get caught in paralysis by analysis on the internet. Speak to people who know what they are doing, have either achieved it themselves or have replicated the results on others, and take their advice.

The key to succeeding in any diet is to know what to adjust and when, plus staying consistent. I've said this a million times before but consistency beats everything in any aspect of life. Working hard towards a goal will even beat natural talent 90% of the time. You have to have a smart plan, adjust it as necessary and follow it all the way through.

Plan smartly. Adjust intelligently. Execute. Achieve.

Stay healthy,

Mike

Unorthodox Nutrition work with athletes worldwide, from local stars right the way through to UFC fighters, Premiership Footballers and World Champions. They specialise in helping combat athletes lose fat and gain muscle so that they can operate to the maximum of their potential during training and competition.

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FIT 2 FIGHT

CHIN-UP PROGRESSION WITH ANDY MARSHALL

YOUR PRIMARY BACK BUILDER EXERCISES ARE DEADLIFTS AND CHIN-UPS, BUT TOO MANY PEOPLE CAN'T DO ONE OF THE SIMPLEST EXERCISES. THERE ARE MORE THAN LIKELY TWO REASONS YOU CAN'T DO CHIN-UPS: YOU'RE TOO WEAK OR YOU'RE TOO FAT.

Neither of the above is good. If you're too fat, then start taking steps to improve your body composition; it's not rocket science - just eat less and do more.

Below are some very effective movements to help you progress to full chin-ups. Each exercise is listed with progressions so once you complete all sub-steps, progress to the next step. To progress it may require you to complete a workout 1 time or 20 times, in either case - stay the course.

STEP 1

Chin-ups on straight bar (knees bent) - horizontal/inverted rows.

Progression 1: 2 sets of 5 reps

Progression 2: 3 sets of 8 reps

Progression 3: 3 sets of 12 reps

Progression 4: 3 sets of 10 (5 second eccentric, pull up explosively)

STEP 2

Chin-ups on straight bar (legs straight) - horizontal/inverted rows.

Progression 1: 2 sets of 5 reps

Progression 2: 3 sets of 8 reps

Progression 3: 3 sets of 12 reps

Progression 4: 3 sets of 10 (5 second eccentric, pull up explosively)

STEP 3

Flexed arm hang

Progression 1: 3 sets flexed arm hang, hold 12 seconds, then 3 sets 12 inverted rows

Progression 2: 3 sets flexed arm hang, hold 21 seconds, then 3 sets 12 inverted rows (3 second eccentric phase)

Progression 3: 3 sets flexed arm hang, hold 30 seconds, then 3 sets 12 inverted rows (5 second eccentric phase)

STEP 4

Eccentric chin-ups/pull-ups

Progression 1: Band-assisted chin-ups 3x3, then eccentric chin-ups (jump up lower to full extension, take 5 seconds) 3 sets 4 reps

Progression 2: Band-assisted chin-ups 4x4, then eccentric chin-ups (jump up lower to full extension, take 7 seconds) 3 sets 4 reps

Progression 3: Band-assisted chin-ups 5x5, then eccentric chin-ups (jump up lower to full extension, take 8 seconds) 3 sets 4 reps

Now your once feeble body is ready to do legit chin-ups and your journey is only just beginning!

BRAZILIAN JIU-JITSU

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GIVEAWAY

WIN

A SCRAMBLE SENGOKU KIMONO!

Our friends at Scramble have offered-up one of their awesome Sengoku kimonos for a lucky JJS reader!

The Sengoku is a black, 100% cotton kimono with a full rashguard lining and features repeating inner print of a classic Japanese samurai ukiyo-e.

To enter our draw to win a Scramble Sengoku kimono all you need to do is answer the following question:

WHO IS RICKSON GRACIE'S SON?

A) Kron
B) Harry
C) Kazushi

Send your answers to bjjstyle@gmail.com with your full name, best delivery address and size information.
Good luck!

Closing date – 12th March 2015. The draw takes place on 13th March 2015 and the winner will be notified by email. One entry per person.

For a full list of Scramble products visit

WWW.SCRAMBLESTUFF.COM

JIU JITSU STYLE REVIEW CORNER

DO YOU WANT YOUR PRODUCTS REVIEWED?
To have your jiu jitsu gear featured in JJS, send us an email at info@bjjstyle.com

SUBMISSION FC "BAMBOO FRENZY" GI

Though not the first bamboo product to arrive on the market, the latest offering from Submission FC is quite different from your average kimono. The use of bamboo (alongside polyester and cotton) within the construction of this gi is said to offer added comfort and durability. There are many studies looking at processes behind using bamboo as a fabric, with the Submission FC website stating that:

"Most bamboo fabric in the market today in any industry has a very smooth and silky feel to it, a lot like rayon, because essentially that's what it is. Rayon is a regenerated cellulose fibre, which means that it starts out as an all-natural raw material and then is converted into a fibre through a chemical process. This makes the fibre fall into a category between naturals and synthetics. Rayon's cellulose source can be from wood, paper, cotton fibre or, in this case, bamboo."

Fans of Submission FC gear will be familiar with the branding placement on this gi, with the worded logos situated across both shoulders on the jacket. The colour scheme is distinctive, with the use of earthy browns and greens, no doubt as homage to the use of bamboo within the production process. The "Bamboo Frenzy" logo is situated on the bottom left hand section and upper neck section of the jacket, as well as on the lower right area of the gi pants.

As with all previous Submission FC kimonos, the construction of this product is of the highest standard. The jacket showed next to no shrinkage after a month of testing, with the sizing staying true to the details listed on the Submission FC website.

When it came to rolling, the product was definitely one of the more comfortable kimonos we have tested, but by no means in a league of its own. Whether or not the use of bamboo has really added to the comfort of the gi is up for debate, but we are sure buyers will have no complaints.

AVAILABLE VIA WWW.SUBMISSIONFC.COM FOR $169.95

THE BARATOPLATA BOTTOM GAME APP

The Baratoplata is a shoulder-lock submission created by Gracie Barra black belt, Rafael Freitas, who is also known by his nickname – "Barata". Barata has a fantastic pedigree as a competitor, with black belt Pan Am and Nogi World titles to his name. With over 13 years of experience on the mat, he has also developed fantastic skills as a teacher to go with his unique shoulder-lock attacks.

In short, the Baratoplata is probably one of the most crazy, innovative and generally awesome submissions you are likely to see. But, as it turns out, the position is far from being just a flashy highlight reel attack; it's a genuine technique that can be effectively worked into your game.

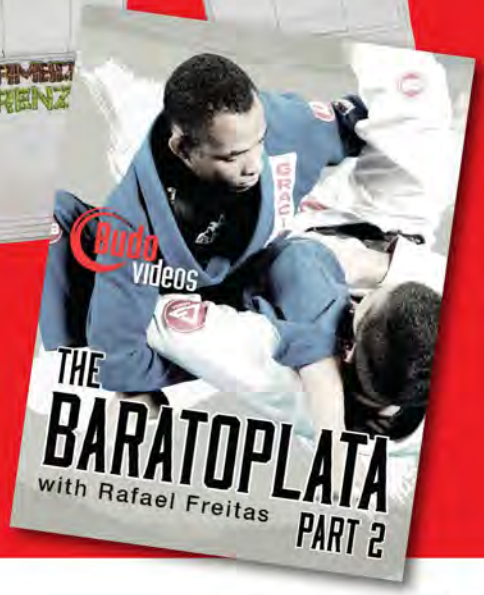
In this app, Freitas focuses on using the Baratoplata when off his back, showcasing effective ways to apply the submission from multiple guard-based scenarios. His teaching is both detailed and concise, with every movement explained appropriately, with multiple camera angles to support the dictation. The app is created alongside BudoVideos, so you can rest assured the production value is second to none.

The app includes a total of 19 technique videos:

- Pulling to guard
- From closed guard 1
- From closed guard 2
- From butterfly guard
- From spider guard 1
- From spider guard 2
- From triangle defence 1
- From triangle defence 2
- From armbar defence
- From omoplata
- From double underhook pass
- From both knees on the ground
- Post the right leg
- Post the left leg
- Standing up
- Holding his hands together
- Forward roll
- Keeping the head low
- Closing

Coming in at £13.99, some could argue this is a little pricey, but we'd be inclined to disagree. The Baratoplata really does represent premium content and a truly unique insight into a very interesting position. Who knows, this could be a gem of knowledge that truly opens up your game. If you're a fan, make sure you also check out The Baratoplata Top Game App too.

AVAILABLE VIA THE ITUNES STORE FOR £13.99



GAMENESS ELITE KIMONO

Gameness is a brand that needs no introduction, having started making jiu jitsu gear way back in 1998. The flagship Gameness offering, the Elite kimono, has had a revamp for 2015, and it's a real Rolls Royce of a gi!

The brand new Elite kimono is the first in a series of new Gameness products set for 2015, and there have been some wholesale changes to the branding. The main Gameness logo, situated along the midsection of the left jacket section, has been simplified – making for an overall classier feel. There is also prominent use of a new "G" logo on many areas of the gi, including the shoulders, elbows and jacket skirt. In fact, there are so many design features on the new Elite that it's hard to list them all! The upper arm sections and trousers also include two new logos, one a diamond motif and the other a flag emblem. The trousers are very unique, with the black kimono coming with white contrast stitching that resembles a sort of spider web pattern. All in all, this gi is about as eye catching as it comes.

As with the previous version of the Elite gi, the real detail lies within. The jacket includes a full inner rashguard lining that is not only ridiculously comfortable, but also a fantastic touch of flair. The lining consists of a camouflage pattern and the use of military inspired Gameness wording. If you've never rolled in a rashguard-lined kimono before, you are really missing out!

Aesthetics aside, the Gameness Elite is probably one of the most perfectly constructed gis we've ever tested. The 550gsm pearl weave jacket is built like a tank, the trousers are made of "military standard" ripstop cotton and every area of potential stress is double reinforced. This is a gi that's built for the long run.

As you'd expect from a premium product, there's a premium price tag to go with it. That said, buyers will not be disappointed with the quality of this gi and the price more than represents value for money.

AVAILABLE VIA WWW.GAMENESSEUROPE.COM FOR £120 AND WWW.GAMENESS.COM FOR $239

JIU JITSU BROTHERHOOD "FACE YOUR FEARS" RASH GUARD

Jiu Jitsu brotherhood is the brainchild of Nicolas Gregoriades - Roger Gracie's first black belt, established author and podcast host. With a number of awesome t-shirt designs and a kimono now available, we were super excited to get hold of one of their brand new "Face Your Fears" rashguards.

The long sleeve rashguard features the now iconic Jiu Jitsu Brotherhood logo on the back and upper right arm. For those not familiar with their philosophy, the origins of their logo are listed on the website: "During his journey, the martial artist must face all aspects of himself. Our logo is designed to express this, which is why we chose the image of a serpent devouring its own tail, the Ouroboros. It represents self-reflexivity and the constant process of renewal, two things which are inextricably entwined with the practice of jiu jitsu."

The centrepiece of the rashguard is, without doubt, the prominent artwork on the front chest section, designed by Gartista™ and Apryl Eppinger. The artwork shows a solitary samurai stood facing a giant serpent, sword drawn and ready to attack. Above and below the artwork the slogan "Everything that you want is on the other side of fear" is displayed in striking fonts - a powerful message for us grapplers and for life in general too! The artwork is also displayed on the upper left arm section of the rashguard, but without the slogan.

The combination of the black rashguard, offset with trademark Jiu Jitsu Brotherhood blue and the vibrant orange and green within the artwork makes this an extremely eye catching product, and one that we had a lot of fun wearing.

When it comes to the product itself, the rashguard really held up well under the strains of hard training over a one month period. Unlike some compression gear, our medium sample fitted perfectly, with no baggy areas of material but not too tight under the arms or around the waist. All in all, a great product and a must have purchase for JJB fans.

AVAILABLE VIA WWW.JJBGEAR.COM FOR £35

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GI SPOTLIGHT | AESTHETIC WHITEOUT KIMONO

OVERVIEW

Aesthetic kimonos really are a sight to behold, and, as the name implies, the whiteout is no different. This all-white gi boasts subtle design elements and stylish silver embroidery, all wrapped up in an ultra-light 350gsm pearl weave product.

JACKET

This jacket really is something of an enigma, as it's sure to appeal to both minimalists and flashy grapplers alike. The all-white jacket has very little in the way of design elements, but those that are in place are stunning. Aesthetic's logo is embroidered in silver along the upper right arm and parallel to the left jacket lapel. There is also an Aesthetic logo and kanji situated on the back of the jacket just below the neck section.

Coming in at 350gsm, this really is a light jacket, but all the appropriate attention to detail has been taken to ensure durability. In fact, both the jacket and trouser cuffs feature patent-pending double-reinforced grip breaks – now that's a mouthful! The inner jacket labeling is all very fancy, featuring glittering silver wording as well as stylish patterns running along the neck and skirt sections.

TROUSERS

Now here is where Aesthetic really take things to the next level. Every whiteout kimono comes complete with two pairs of trousers! As well as including ripstop cotton bottoms, buyers also get a second pair of cotton twill ones for good measure. Having an extra pair of trousers is always very handy, especially for people looking to keep a pair fresh for competitions or in case of any unfortunate rips occurring over time. A great touch of class from Aesthetic.

DETAILS

The Whiteout's real beauty lies in its simplistic design, quality construction and general lightness. The attention to detail taken with all logo designs and placements are fantastic, and Aesthetic is fast becoming recognised as a producer of some of the classiest products on the market. Refreshingly, the kimono doesn't include contrast stitching, instead relying on the delicate silver detail designed to catch keen eyes.

SUMMARY

All white kimonos are big hits with traditionalists, and the Whiteout is sure to tick all the relevant boxes. That said, there are enough modern, stylish design aesthetics to make this a very appealing product amongst the growing gi addict community too. For a kimono that comes in at £99.99 the inclusion of two pairs of trousers is pretty much unheard of, so Aesthetic really deserves a special pat on the back.

The kimono is so clean in appearance that you almost don't want to wear it on the mats! That said, as with all previous Aesthetic offerings, you can expect to be rolling in the whiteout for years to come thanks to its excellent construction. It's also worth noting that the whiteout is a limited edition product, so you'd better get your orders in fast!

AVAILABLE VIA

WWW.FIGHTAESTHETIC.COM

FOR £99.99

TOURNAMENT REVIEW

PICTURES VIA METAMORIS PRO

METAMORIS PRO

If you were ever looking for a perfect example of how to build up some serious hype before an event, just tune in to the Metamoris Facebook page and YouTube channel. The fifth rendition of the world's premier submission only invitational was hotly anticipated, with the headline fight seeing two legends clashing once again. Renzo Gracie vs Kazushi Sakuraba was, perhaps, the biggest headline fight Metamoris has put on to date.

Despite only one submission finish occurring throughout all bouts, fans were treated to some exceptional jiu jitsu and plenty of action. Purists may take issue with the lack of gi matches on the card, with only Keenan Cornelius and Yuri Simoes facing-off in the kimono, but most will agree that the majority of matches were well contested and full of drama.

Special mention must be reserved for Garry Tonon, who picked up his second submission finish at Metamoris in as many appearances, as well as the afore-mentioned Cornelius and Simoes: Cornelius pushed himself so hard during the fight that he missed his post-match interview, instead running to the bathroom to vomit!

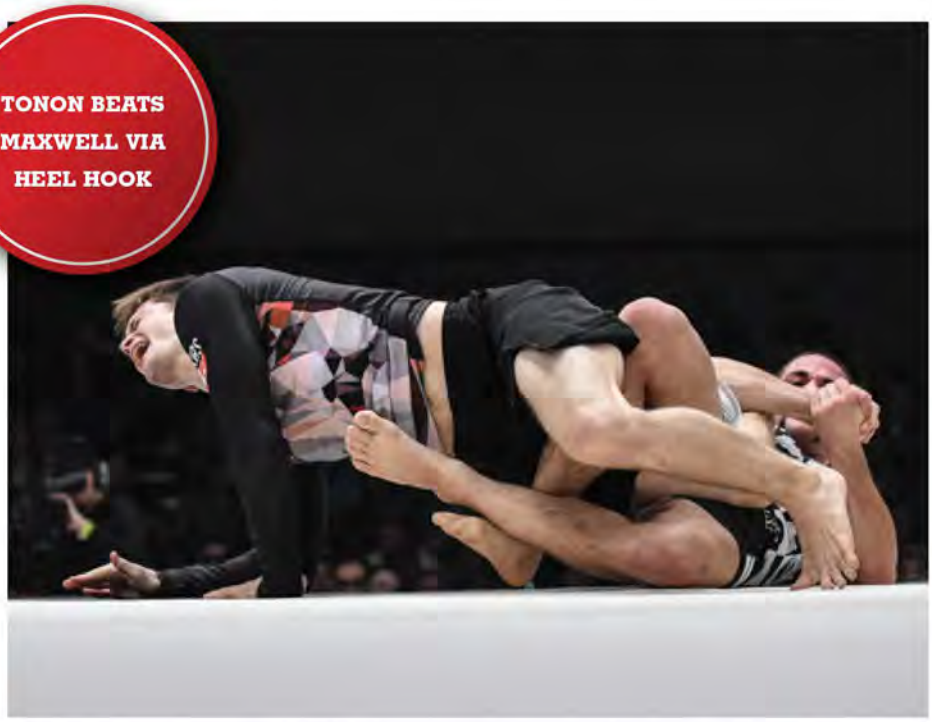
All in all, Metamoris V was another fantastic show – one that will be hard to top. Here's to the next event!

GARRY TONON VS ZAK MAXWELL

Tonon and Maxwell are two of the most exciting American talents on the grappling scene at the moment, so we were expecting fireworks from the word go. After a flurry of early back and forth action, the slightly heavier Tonon started to stamp his authority on the bout, with his opponent looking just a little vulnerable in the nogi environment.

Having done his best to weather a tirade of attacks, Maxwell finally succumbed to Tonon's trademark heel hook, bringing the bout to an end and Tonon his second Metamoris submission

TONON BEATS MAXWELL VIA HEEL HOOK

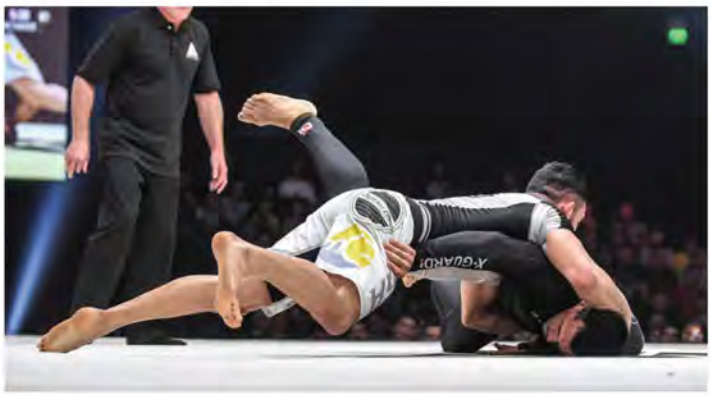


VINNY MAGALHAES VS MATHEUS DINIZ

With Magalhaes' original opponent, Kevin Casey, having to withdraw because of injury, Metamoris officials launched a Facebook campaign to select a last minute replacement for the event. They even offered-up a $10,000 prize fund if the substitute was able to submit Magalhaes! The online community favoured Matheus Diniz, a brown belt nogi world champion and student under Marcelo Garcia, as the appropriate replacement.

Diniz more than held his own during what was one of the less eventful match-ups on the card. With both athletes reluctant to pull guard, the first half of the bout turned into a wrestling match, with plenty of stag-like head pummelling and grip fighting. Though Magalhaes was able to threaten on occasions, neither fighter ever really looked in danger of being finished, with the bout eventually going to a draw.

MAGALHAES AND DINIZ FIGHT TO A DRAW



CORNELIUS AND SIMOES FIGHT TO A DRAW

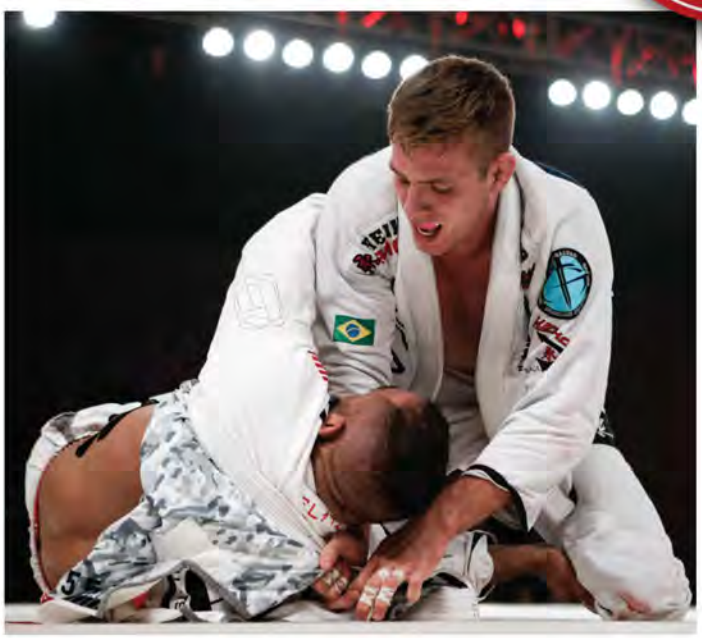
YURI SIMOES VS KEENAN CORNELIUS

For us, this was the fight of the night. With Rafael Lovato Jr withdrawing late due to injury, Simoes saw Keenan Cornelius drafted in as a replacement. Coming off the back of a victory over Keenan at the recent IBJJ nogi worlds, Simoes was no doubt filled with confidence.

As expected, there were fireworks from start to finish in this bout. Interestingly, Cornelius' patented worm guard was nowhere to be seen, perhaps emphasising the position's lack of genuine "finishing" opportunities. That said, Cornelius found himself on Simoes' back on a number of occasions, but he never quite managed to secure the definitive grips needed to finish a choke.

Simoes had his own share of solid submission attempts, the most notable a deep-locked kneebar that looked sure to result in a tap. Testament to Keenan's talents as an escape artist, he avoided the submission in style.

Despite the fight ending in a draw, it was a true back-and-forth encounter with plenty of genuine submission attempts coming from both fighters. We'd love to see a rematch!



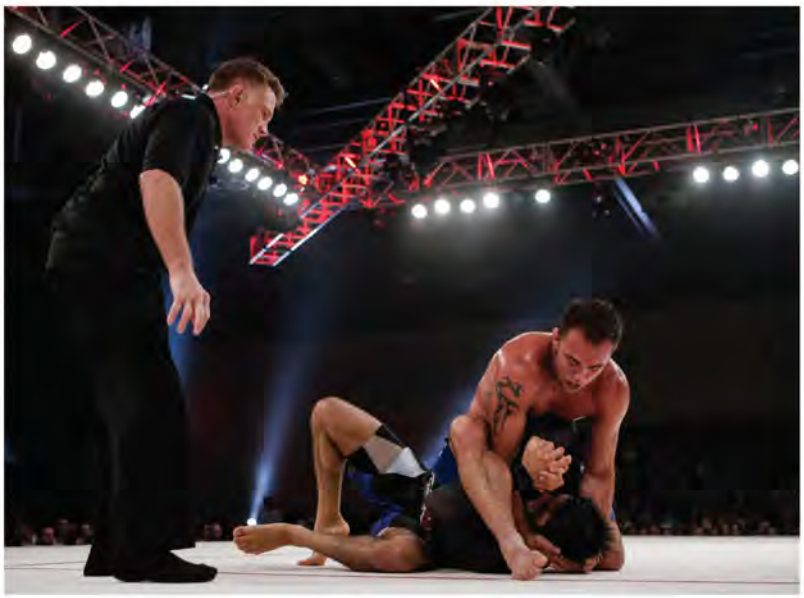
SECRET MATCH: ROBERTO SATOSHI SOUZA VS JAKE SHIELDS

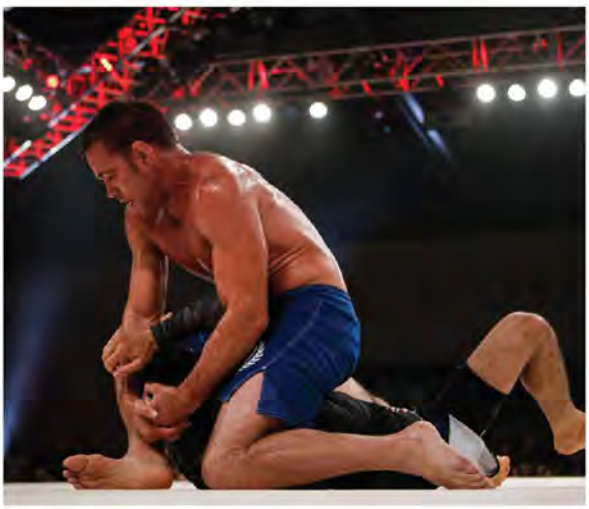
The secret match for the evening saw MMA veteran and Cesar Gracie black belt, Jake Shields, take on the always-exciting Roberto Satoshi Souza. With neither fighter knowing their opponent until they stepped onto the mat, the secret match concept added even more excitement to proceedings.

Satoshi came into the bout with more pedigree in competitive jiu jitsu, but with a weight disadvantage and – notably – confined to nogi rules. Though one of the best fighters in the world, nogi was definitely not the Brazilian's forte.

After a few initial scrambles, and with Satoshi displaying some decent wrestling, the match consisted of a series of Shields' guard passes. Credit where credit is due, the Cesar Gracie black belt managed to dominate Satoshi from a positional perspective, progressing to mount on two occasions. That said, neither fighter ever really looked likely to finish, and the match ended in a draw.

SOUZA AND SHIELDS FIGHT TO A DRAW





RORY MACDONALD VS JT TORRES

As a student under the legendary John Danaher and a true welterweight contender in the UFC, the BJJ community was intrigued to see how Rory MacDonald would fare against the likes of JT Torres.

MACDONALD AND TORRES FIGHT TO A DRAW

The match did not disappoint. MacDonald's skills on the ground were quickly confirmed, and the Canadian was not shy with his submission attempts, throwing caution to the wind on a number of occasions. Torres brought his usual pace, dynamism and intensity to the match, ending up in a number of dominant positions and coming very close to finishing the bout with a kimura.

Once again the fans saw no finish, but once again they witnessed a very open encounter with plenty of submission attempts and transitions. For a man with little (or no) experience as a competitive grappler, MacDonald did exceptionally well to hang with Torres, who is quickly emerging as one of the best lightweight fighters in the world.

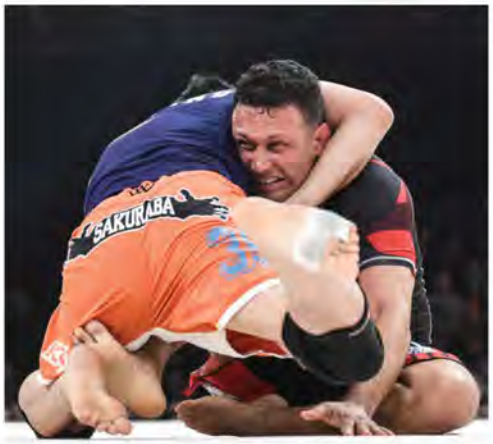
RENZO GRACIE VS KAZUSHI SAKURABA

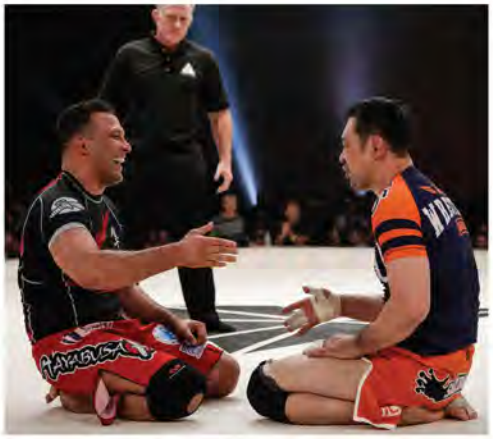
So, to the main event of the evening! The mere sight of Renzo and Sakuraba gracing the same mat sent shivers down our spines; Gracie sporting his customary grin on entrance, Saku his Japanese henna mask. In all honesty, the match outcome didn't even matter.

Sadly, Renzo entered the match with a bad knee injury, a result of some last minute training the day before the event. Consequently, the majority of the bout saw Gracie working off his back in the closed guard, with Sakuraba trying his best to pass from his knees.

Though there were long periods of inactivity, fans didn't go home disappointed. With the match ending in a draw, Sakuraba showed genuine frustration at not being able to push harder for a finish. For us, a draw was a fair result, and we'll look back on this historic fight with fond memories for years to come.

SAKURABA AND GRACIE FIGHT TO A DRAW





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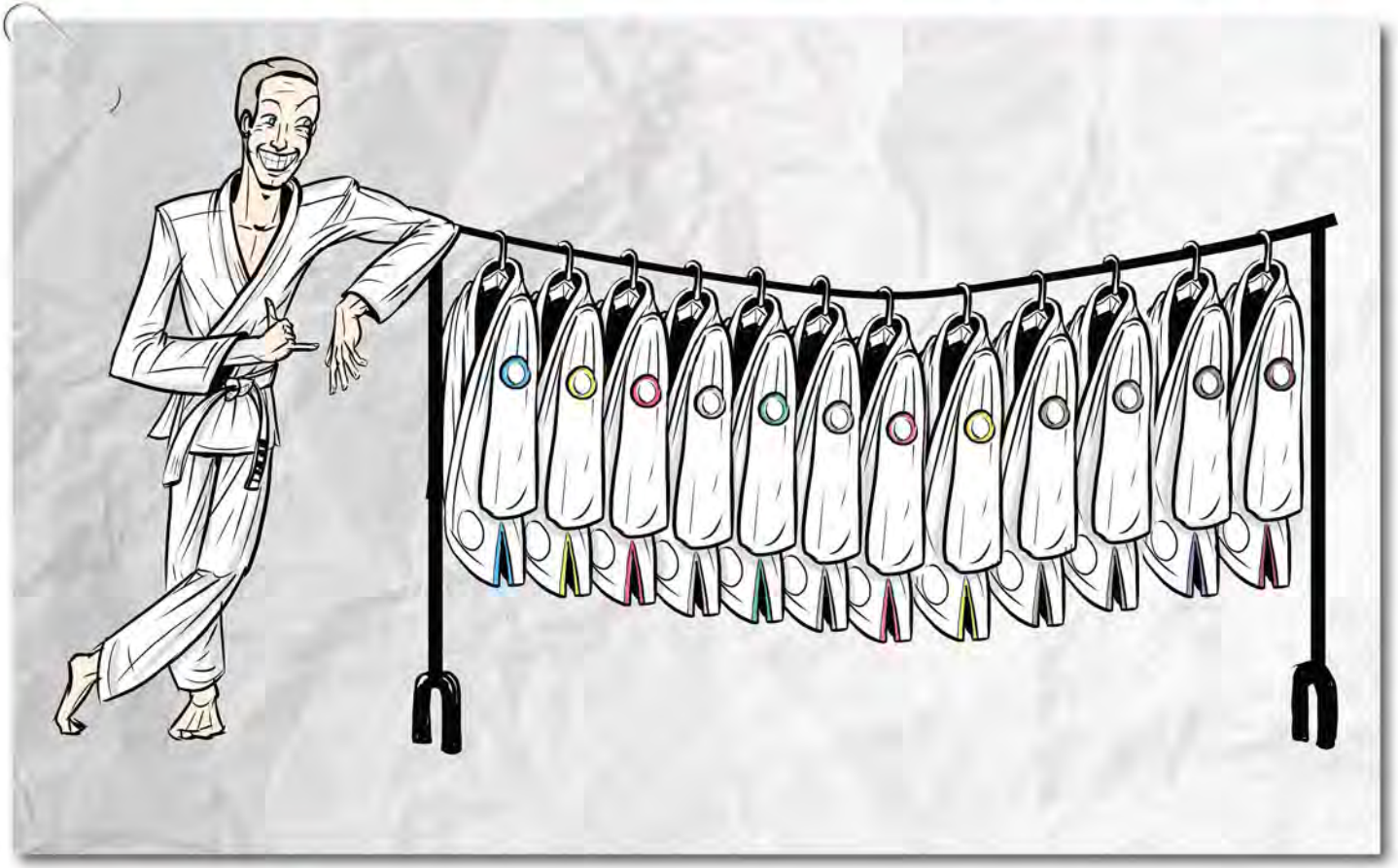
PASSING NOTES

A Q&A on the pressing topics in the Brazilian Jiu Jitsu world.



GI ADDICTION - WHAT IS IT?

The urge to buy more BJJ uniforms than you could possibly use.

HOW MANY IS TOO MANY?

Good question, but judging from some of the incredibly large racks of gis that some people reveal on their social media pages, we're talking in the region of 30-40, maybe even more.

GOOD LORD, YOU COULD WEAR ONE OF EACH GI EVERY OTHER DAY AND NOT WEAR THE SAME THING TWICE FOR OVER THREE MONTHS!

Well, some people just love gis and they like to have variety.

AT LEAST THEY GET WORN, I CAN'T THINK OF ANY CRIME WORSE THAN A GI BOUGHT AND NEVER USED.

Funny you say that...

OH NO, DON'T TELL ME.

I'm telling! People do indeed buy gis with the sole intention of never wearing them.

WHAT THE BUGGINS IS THE POINT OF THAT THEN?

There is a method to their madness. You see some gis fetch very high prices on the second hand market. These gis are bought and never used so technically they are BNIB.

BNIB??? DON'T YOU SWEAR AT ME!

I'm not swearing...BNIB is an acronym for bought-new-in-bag. These buyers are quick to buy special limited edition gis, often several at a time, and then trade them at an inflated price. A VRHTF (very-rare-hard-to-find) model can fetch several hundred dollars on eBay. Legend has it that a couple of very exclusive examples have sold for over $1000. Buyers often post on Facebook groups LTB (looking-to-buy).

OMG THAT IS TOTALLY WTF!

Now you're the one swearing. Anyway, back to these gi addicts, there is a bit of a split among gi fans; the ones who love buying exotic gis but feel strongly they should be used and abused as intended, and then there are those who buy because they just like collecting gis but want to keep them in pristine condition. The latter even have stickers and patches that state 'Gi Hoarding Is Not A Crime'.

THIS IS COMPLETE MADNESS, THE FOUNDING FATHERS OF BJJ WOULD SPIN IN THEIR GRAVES AT THE THOUGHT OF THEIR HARDCORE STREET EFFECTIVE MARTIAL ART TURNED INTO A FANCY PANTS FASHION PARADE.

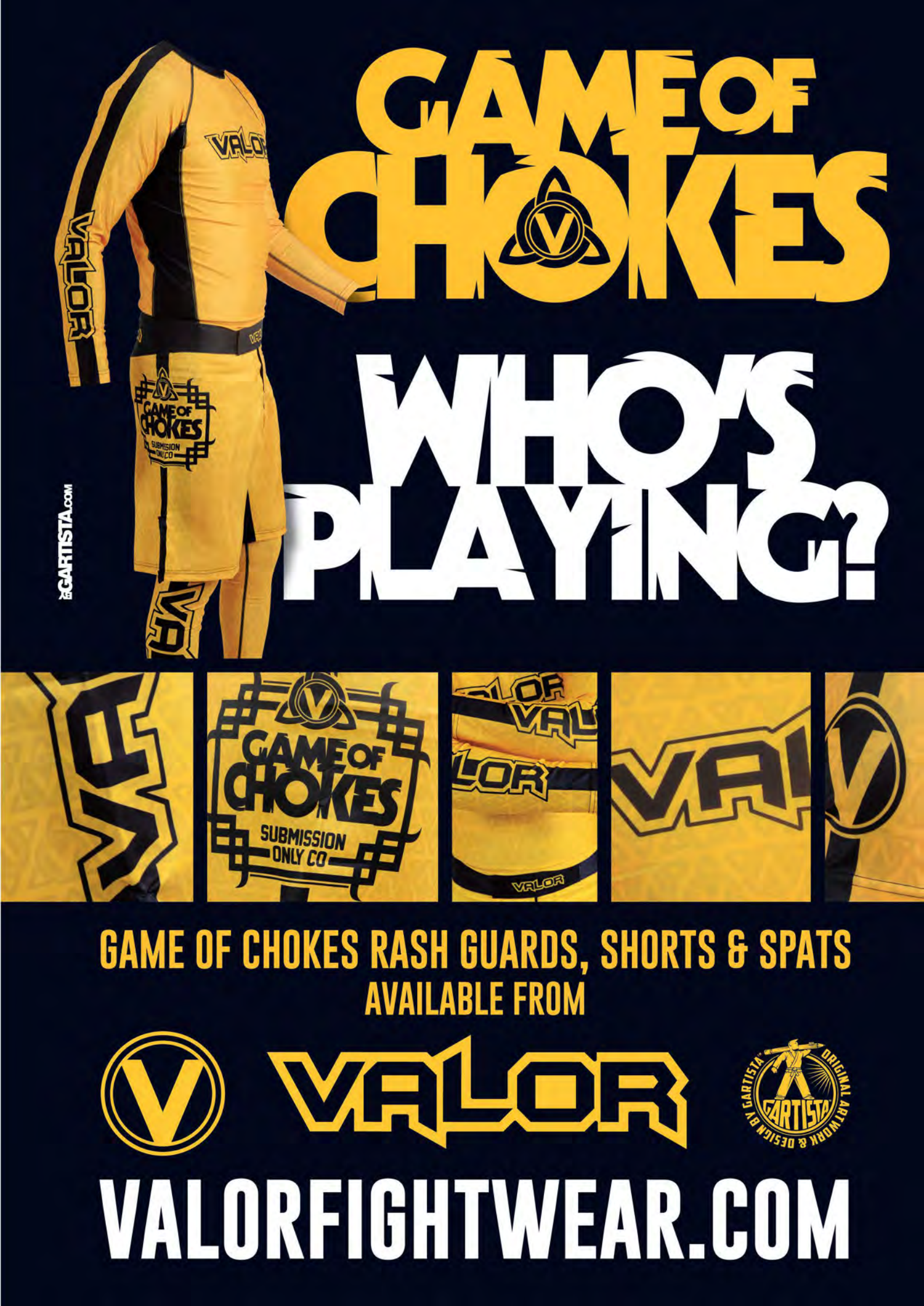
It doesn't just end there I'm afraid. Gi addicts have been known to trade and collect all manner of paraphernalia and accessories such as the bag that the gi came in, stickers, patches - pretty much anything as long as the brand is collectable and there are buyers willing to spend cash for them.

DO SAY

My, what an awesome collection of every single batch of kimono you have dating from 2004 to 2014 including the rare only made for goblins edition of the classic v2.1.3.a.b. model of which there were only three made and they were so secret not even the people that made them knew about it.

DON'T SAY

Time for a spring clean, now which gis do you want to get rid of?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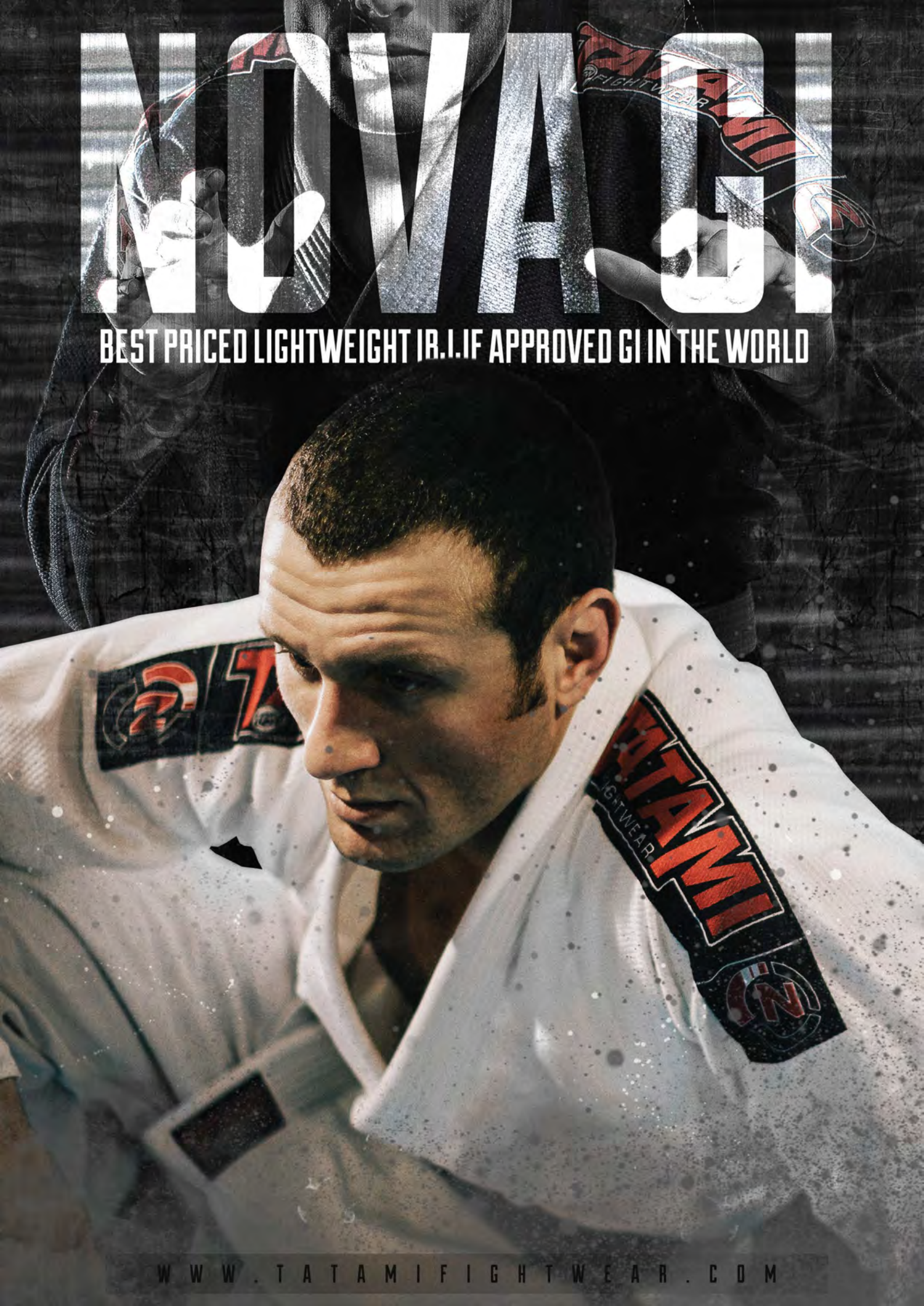
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